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CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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WEDNESDAY MARCH 8, 2023

'CUC was grossly negligent'

www.facebook.com/saipantribune

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE

en. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) slammed the previous management and board of directors of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. yesterday,

accusing them of gross negligence by allowing then-governor Ralph DLG Torres to accumulate over \$177,000 in arrears in utility benefits from CUC.

Babauta said the arrears, which happened from February 2015 to August 2021, included exorbitant utility benefits for a piggery owned by See CUC on Page 4



Mafnas' complaint vs Castro dismissed

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted former chief of staff to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres William Castro's request to dismiss Custom's director Jose Mafnas' suit against him.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted Castro's request last Friday to dismiss the lawsuit of Division of Customs and Bio-Security





director Mafnas against him and former Finance secretary David DLG Atalig.

The suit was dismissed without prejudice; Mafnas was given 14 days to amend

See MAFNAS on Page 4

Groups oppose plan to cull stray, unlicensed dogs on Rota

By MARK RABAGO

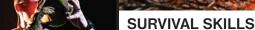
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

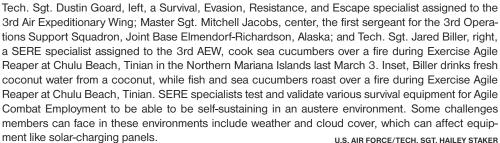


A public notice from the Rota Municipal Council ordering residents of the island to secure their pet dogs because of a plan to "destroy" unlicensed and unclaimed dogs following a rounding up operation is being criticized by animal groups.

Boonie Babies Rescue founder Aria Keilbach said that, to her knowledge, Rota does not have an animal shelter or access to euthanasia drugs,

See GROUPS on Page 4





Larson request to pay off Yutu premium pay OK'd

kimberly esmores@saipantribune.com

ed the stipulated request made Attorney General Edward um pay in the wake of Super by former Finance secretary Manibusan for a final judg-

ment ordering the latter to repay the over \$20,000 she The Superior Court has grant- Larissa Larson and CNMI received in typhoon premi-

See LARSON on Page 4

INSIDE



SUPPLEMENT

Today's issue comes with a pullout supplement that celebrates International Women's

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BUSINESS

United Airlines named Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch as its first Chief Trash Officer.

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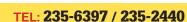
LIFE & STYLE

The Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is going to reopen to visitors and faithful at the end of 2024.

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FAX: 235-3740

Local

Itibus' appointment to CUC board gains broad support

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com

Dr. Dallas M. Peavey Jr., the acting executive director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and CUC chief of administration Betty Terlaje expressed support yesterday to the appointment of former Commonwealth Development Authority board chair Pedro I. Itibus to serve as a member of the CUC board representing Saipan and the Carolinian community.

At a confirmation hearing conducted by the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee, Felix Nogis, the special assistant for the Carolinian Affairs Office, also testified that Itibus has distinguished himself throughout his government career and has earned respect of his superiors and colleagues.

"With his qualifications and experience, he brings a broad-

ARMATECH



Tel: (670) 234-8895 | Email: armatech.saipan@gmail.com Mobile: (670) 287-5525 / (<u>670) 783-8895</u> er perspective and insight to the [CUC] board, should he be confirmed," Nogis said.

Terlaje read a letter from Peavey supporting the appointee's confirmation. Peavey was supposed to attend the hearing, but he's on Tinian to attend to CUC matters.

Peavey stated in the letter thattibus will have the opportunity once again to serve the people of the CNMI as a board member of CUC.

He described Itibus as an an experienced board director in developing programs and in finding policies to advance the mission of the entity he represents.

Terlaje also testified in her personal and professional capacity as CUC chief of administration, saying Itibus has long been a public servant in the CNMI community.

She said that, as a former chairman of the Common-

wealth Economic Development Authority (the former Commonwealth Development Authority), and a former member of upper management of the Department of Public Lands, Itibus brings a lot of experience in providing good governance and is not shy in matters that involve opposition to decisions for the best interest of the entity he represents.

Terlaje said there is a lot of work to be done at CUC, and being a CUC board member is time consuming, voluntary, and unpaid. "Mr. Itibus' willingness, evidenced by his presence today to accept his public service calling once again, is indicative of his commitment to making the CNMI a better home," Terlaje said.

Itibus thanked Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang for having the confidence to appoint him to the CUC board. Itibus said he is honored to be a member of the CUC board if confirmed, and that he is looking forward to facing the challenges, particularly the rising price of fuel, which neither the CNMI nor CUC control.

"But we can depart from fuel and venture into other energy resources. That is a very, very challenging task. I'm looking forward to those tasks," Itibus said.

Sen. Dennis Mendiola (R-Rota) noted that the appointee's expertise and background heavily tends toward enforcement and he is curious to know if being a member of CUC board will pose as a challenge for Itibus in terms of his experience and expertise.

Itibus acknowledged that he does not have any experience in power generation, but that he is willing to learn, sit, and listen to experts. "If I have a question, I will seek out somebody that would assist me," he said.

At the start of the hearing,

Oscar M. Babauta, the special assistant for the Palacios-Apatang administration, said that Itibus has over 50 years of experience in various capacities, both professional and otherwise. He said Itibus started as a law enforcement officer from 1972 to 1988 with the Trust Territory Government and that of the CNMI government, through the Department of Public Safety, before moving on as a deputy clerk in the Superior Court.

In 1988, Itibus worked with the Department of Public Lands as a land investigator before being promoted to chief of the Land Claims Division.

He was also named deputy secretary of DPL before he was appointed by then-governor Benigno R. Fitial to be the DPL secretary, where he served until his retirement in 2016.

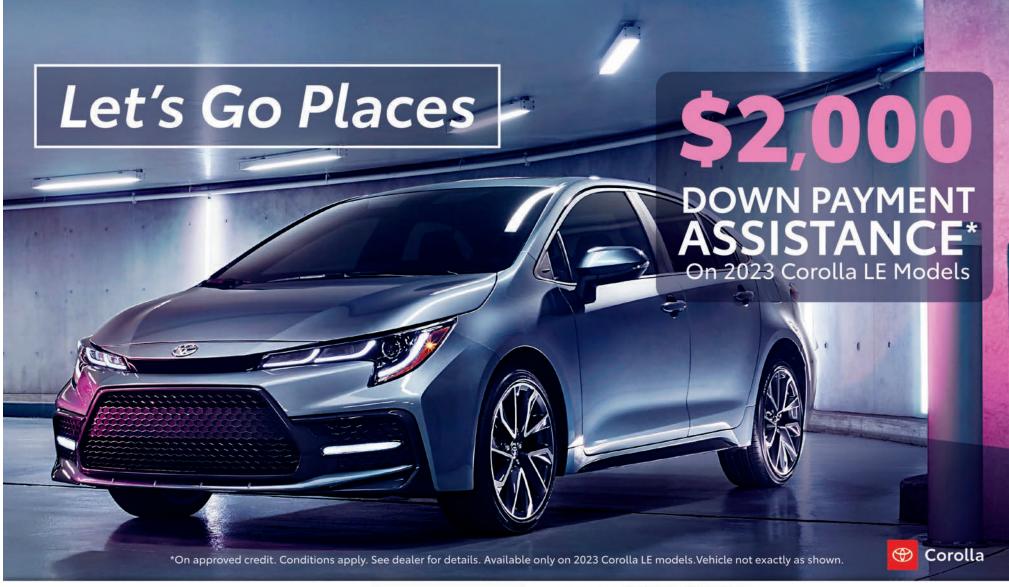
Babauta said that when he was the DPL secretary in 2010 to 2012, Itibus was their Land Claims Division manager, assessing all land claims that have been in limbo for quite sometimes.

Babauta said he finds Itibus' long history of professional experiences, credentials, and commitment to serving the Commonwealth in this capacity as CUC board director makes him a viable candidate.



GOLD WINNER

Mount Carmel School student Chealzka Navarro, under the guidance of Jihye Yun from Yonsei Academy, won gold at the 2023 Tumon Bay Music Festival last March 4, 2023. For her performance, Navarro performed "Rock Prelude No.3" by Christopher Norton in the Solo & Small Ensemble division, competing against 18 other piano finalists.





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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Soroptimist Int'l NMI Chapter meeting tomorrow

The Soroptimist International of the Northern Mariana Islands Chapter will hold its monthly luncheon meeting tomorrow, March 9, at 12pm at the Plumeria Restaurant in Garapan.

Join us to help continue our work for the "Best for Women" in the CNMI!

The Club is accepting new members! Come and meet us and see what we are all about! (PR)

Power service interruption on March 9

There will be a scheduled power service interruption tomorrow, March 9, 2023, on Navy Hill, from 9am to 1pm.

- Purpose: For the line crew to perform a system maintenance by replacing a defective power pole to a concrete pole and an airbrake switch along Chalan Pale Arnold Road in front of the Commonwealth Health Corp.
- Water well(s) affected: Calhoun Booster, CH-5
- (water services to the Chalan Galaide will be affected)
- Wastewater facility affected: S8 and temporary bypass behind the WIC program
- Traffic light(s): near CHCC

For more information, contact the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/ CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). (PR)

CBMA soliciting

assistance for Project:

The Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs is notifying civil engineers, contractors, labor unions, and the public that it has solicited no-cost assistance from the U.S. Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training Program.

The assistance will include a deliberate civil survey assessment of existing social, governmental, economic, legal, environmental, healthcare, educational, or infrastructure systems within the community for perceived vulnerabilities and identify areas for future improvements for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota during the timeframe of spring/ summer of fiscal year 2023.

Anyone who has any questions or wishes to express any opposition to military assistance for this project may contact Daniel Aquino, special assistant to the governor for military affairs, at 670-788-0935, or by email at daniel.aquino@gov. mp; or by mail at Caller Box 10007; Saipan, MP 96950. (PR)

CWA membership meeting on Thursday

The General Membership meeting of the CNMI Women's Association is scheduled for tomorrow, March 9, 2023, at 6pm, at the CNMI Women's Center on Capital Hill, located across the Medicaid Office.

The agenda includes the election of the seven-member board of directors. Those interested in serving on the board are asked to submit a copy of their résumé to the CWA staff no later than 5pm on March 8, 2023.

The annual membership fee

CNMI Restore

participate in the upcoming meeting. If you are interested in becoming a member of the CNMI Women's Association, sign up using this link: https:// cnmiwomen.org/membershipapplication-form/

> For additional information, call (670) 233-8978/9411 or email cnmiwomen@gmail. com. (PR)

of \$20 must be paid for mem-

bers to be able to vote and

Tsunami evacuation

planning needs your input

To better develop the CNMI's initial tsunami evacuation plans, assembly places, and routes, the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Pacific Coastal Research and Planning will be holding town hall meetings across Saipan and are inviting the community to lend their input.

The town hall meetings will take place every Tuesdays and Thursdays from March 7 until March 16 in the villages of Achugao, Garapan, Susupe, Chalan Kanoa, and San Antonio.

The session for residents of Garapan will have their meeting on Thursday, March 9, at the Garapan Elementary School, also from 5pm to 7pm. For those who live in Susupe and the areas of Chalan Kanoa close to Susupe, the Marianas High School will be open next Tuesday, March 14, for this event, and for those in San Antonio and Chalan

Kanoa, the last session will be held on Thursday, March 16, at the Hopwood Jr. High School. All sessions will be from 5pm until 7pm.

To see the current and monthly updated tsunami evacuation zones for each island in the NMI go to https:// arcg.is/H0P48.

For more information, email Mario Kaipat at Mario. Kaipat@cnmihsem.gov.mp or contact Robbie Greene at Robbie.Greene@PacificCRP. org. (Chrystal Marino)



FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Northern Marianas College president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Ed.D., and the college leadership team hosted the House Committee on Education last March 7, 2023, to discuss ways to enhance NMC's programs and services for students and the community through legislative solutions. Led by committee chair Rep. Manny Gregory T. Castro (Ind-Saipan), alongside committee members Rep. Blas Jonathan "BJ" T. Attao (Ind-Saipan), Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), the committee gained insight into the college's existing programs, its financial picture, and plans to rebuild and upgrade its main campus through its facilities master plan. NMC will continue to work closely with the Legislature on public policies that will strengthen the college's ability to build the CNMI's intellectual capital, grow and develop the islands' workforce, and help students land meaningful careers in the future.



onwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands **BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING**

P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950 Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814 Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net



Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on Thursday, March 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room, on Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

- Meeting Call to Order
- Determination of Quorum Review and Adoption of Agenda
- Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/26/2023)
- **Public Comments**
- Chairperson's Report VI.
- Welcoming of NCARR Visiting Officials
- 2023 Regional Summit March 3-4, 2023, Honolulu, HI
- VII. Director's Report
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature A. Governor's Office
 - Legislature
- B.
- X. Old Business XI. New Business
- Pending Applications for Board's Review XII.
 - New Application
 - Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
- XV. Announcements
 - Next Meeting Date
 - Adjournment of Meeting

Crowne Plaza, NMTech sign MOA to beef up local capacity

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com REPORTER

The Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, under the brand of the InterContinental Hotels Group, and the Northern Marianas Technical Institute have started a partnership that aims to build local capacity in the fields of hospitality and tourism.

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Robert Coates, NMTech's CEO Jodina Attao, Island Training Solutions' Jim Arenovski, along with Crowne Plaza's executive and leadership team, joined the signing ceremony for the memorandum of agreement yesterday morning at the hotel resort's Azucena room.

The agreement starts the partnership with Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, NMTech, and ITS that would result in students undergoing training at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

Prior to the signing, a presentation was made by Crowne Plaza on the IHG brand and IHG Academy, which pertains to different aspects of training and development, with the end goal of



Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager Robert Coates, seated left, Northern Marianas Technical Institute's CEO Jodina Attao, seated right, Island Training Solution's Jim Arenovski, standing right, and Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's executive sous chef Zenn Tomokane take a photo after Coates and Attao sign a memorandum of agreement between NMTech and IHG yesterday morning at Crowne Plaza's Azucena Room.

working within the IHG brand. They offer Early Experiences, which include work experience, internships, apprenticeships; and Leadership Programs, which include Future Leader Embark and Future Leader Aspire.

In this trio of partnerships with ITS, NMTech, and IHG, "ITS is responsible for training the 75 students in the Trading Up Program within the CNMI Public School System get pumped into the IHG Academy,' Attao said.

NMTech's mission is to invest in students by providing advanced trades, career, and technical educa-

and filling the pipeline so that they

tion to produce skilled individuals

and strengthen the CNMI workforce. With this program, "we are ready and willing to work with the hotels in the CNMI to have a place for students to work" after they've completed their hospitality certification.

"The hotel industry is not just about customer service. It's already a full-blown operation and everything that NMTech offers can be enhanced through additional partnerships with hotels such as IHG," added Attao. Not only will students be filling gaps in the front of the house jobs such as front desk and waitstaff, but also engineering, culinary, IT, and other jobs in the hospitality industry, she said.

NMTech has so far partnered with different organizations like ITS, Northern Marianas College, CNMI PSS, and now IHG, which "are coming into play so that we can expand our services and continue to build our capacity as a community... Ultimately, we're trying to build NMTech as the hub," said Attao. NMTech is looking at partnering with organizations as well.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MAFNAS

From Page 1

his complaint.

In her order last March 3, Manglona granted Castro's motion to dismiss regarding the political coercion claim because the plaintiff did not sufficiently allege a demotion.

Manglona also granted the defendants' motion to dismiss as to Mafnas' claim for a procedural due process violation because the plaintiff did not identify the legal basis for his protected property interest or adequately pleaded a deprivation of that property interest.

She also granted the CNMI government's motion as to Mafnas' claim of retaliation, because the plaintiff has failed to adequately plead an adverse employment action or causation.

Meanwhile, the court denied the CNMI Office of the Attorney General's motion for substitution based on substitution and sovereign immunity.

Back in July 2022, Mafnas sued Atalig, Castro, and the CNMI government to prevent them from removing Mafnas from his position as Customs director or to reinstate him pending a decision on the merits of his complaint.

In his lawsuit, Mafnas, a civil service employee, said he was transferred to a non-existent position in the Department of Commerce because he was supporting the independent gubernatorial candidacy of then-lieutenant governor Arnold I. Palacios.

Mafnas, through attorney Charity Hodson, also requested the court to issue a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against the defendants.

In August 2022, Manglona issued a preliminary injunction in favor of Mafnas to preserve the status quo based on the parties' stipulation.

Mafnas has since been reinstated pending decision on the merits of his case.

GROUPS

From Page 1

which are both crucial to addressing an overpopulation of stray dogs.

"Overall, the entire CNMI needs reliable, easy access to these animal resources in order to help the community members and dogs of the Marianas," she said.

Keilbach agrees, though, with the municipal council that stray dogs are indeed a threat to the community and visitors on Rota. "Dogs running loose are at risk of many dangers and also can be problematic for community members and tourists if they are running around unsupervised and possibly being territorial."

Having community members secure their pet dogs will not only help the government distinguish between stray and pet dogs but will also help create a safer environment for people on Rota.

Keilbach said it's not safe for the community nor humane for the animals themselves to have strays roaming the island.

"The overpopulation of stray dogs suffering from so many ailments in the wild will continue to reproduce with no end in sight without access to spay/neuter services. Therefore, these animals will continue suffering on the streets and succumbing to slow, painful deaths and cruelty. It is in the best interest of both the community as well as the generations of suffering dogs to get the strays off of the streets," she said.

Saipan Cares for Animals' Beth Pliscou quoted Mahatma Gandhi in describing the situation on Rota and how the CNMI handles its overpopulation of dogs.

According to Gandhi: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

Pliscou said, "Obviously, a spay/ neuter program, available to all, is a proactive way to end this problem rather than ignoring the situation until it is completely out of control and mass euthanasia is the only option."

She described the municipal council's plan to cull stray dogs as "shortsighted thinking."

Rota Mayor Aubry Hocog said the municipal council needs to follow what Saipan is doing to address the stray dog population on Rota in the most humane way. "We have many families on Rota who treat their pets as loved ones, so we need to be considerate of how this is approached and executed," she said.

Hocog added while the municipal council is tasked with this responsibility, she does know they are making preparations to identify the best plan of action to address this. "I believe they are first starting off with having all dogs registered," she said.

Under Rota local law, any dog found to be without a license shall be caged and if the owner does not claim and license the dog within five days it shall be disposed of in the most humane procedure or via means that are reasonably available.

CUC

From Page 1

Torres' immediate relative that was operating on the private property, and included paying for two residences.

"And I hope that history would not repeat itself at CUC," said Babauta, who chairs the Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee.

By previous administration, the senator was referring to the administration of CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho.

Camacho resigned from his post as CUC executive director last Feb. 21, on the same day when news surfaced that Gov. Arnold I. Palacios is determined to replace him. Camacho, who is on medical leave, earlier told Saipan Tribune that his resignation will take effect at the end of his contract, which is due to expire on March 26, 2023.

Babauta talked about the impeachment allegations against Torres during the Senate EAGI Committee's confirmation hearing for the appointment of Pedro I. Itibus to serve as a member of the CUC board of directors.

The senator said the 22nd House of Representatives impeached Torres for theft of utilities.

She said that pursuant to the Commonwealth Code Title 4 Section 8131, the governor may remove an appointed board member for gross neglect or dereliction of duty, breach of fiduciary duty, conviction of a felony, or mental or physical incapacity.

On Nov. 24, 2021, Torres said at one month he saw a CUC billing that was extremely high, so he called Camacho to express concern about the billing. Torres said he asked Camacho to look into the high water billing, then asked him to make sure that they put a separate water meter and to have each meter calculated the right way, meaning there is a government rate and there is a residen-

Torres emphasized that the government has not paid a penny on the private property that has a piggery because that comes out from the other account.

He also explained about a utility account registered to his sister that was paid in the amount of \$36,069 by the government for power usage from January 2015 and September 2018.

Torres said his sister used to live in that Koblerville house, so her name is on the billing. He said when he won as lieutenant governor and moved in, CUC said that he had two choices either to disconnect or have it under his name and then charge him a reconnection fee, or just submit a letter from his sister authorizing him to use the Koblerville house under her name with authorization. He said that's why CUC was billing that residence to his sister because his sister gave him authorization to live there.

On May 18, 2022, the Senate acquitted Torres of the six Articles of impeachment brought by the House, finding him not guilty of corruption and neglect of duty.

LARSON

From Page 1

Typhoon Yutu in 2018.

Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja has granted the stipulated—or agreed upon—request submitted by Larson and Manibusan seeking final judgment in the illegal overtime suit Manibusan filed against her and other similarly situated back in 2022.

The stipulated request is pursuant to Larson's previous response where she admitted that she was not entitled to the \$36,775.43 in Yutu overtime compensation which she received back in 2019.

According to Naraja's final judgment order, Larson must pay \$27,574.85 as recovery of the unlawful typhoon premium pay she received.

"The plaintiff is entitled to repay-

ment by defendant to the Commonwealth Treasury on a judgment in the amount of \$27,574.85 to fully satisfy the Commonwealth's recovery of unlawful typhoon premium payments,"

The judge ordered Larson to make monthly payments of \$250 toward the final judgments starting

Last month, Larson conceded in her response to the AG's lawsuit that she was not entitled to the typhoon premium pay of over \$36,000 that she was paid back in January 2019 and had proposed that the Superior Court issue a judgment for her

Larson, through attorney Robert Torres, said she does not contest that she was not entitled to the typhoon premium pay.

In addition, Torres said his client does not contest nor oppose an entry of judgment against her for the sum of \$36,775 with credit for her surrendering her accrued annual leave in the amount of \$9,200.58 which she claims she waived back in March 2019, following her resignation as Finance secretary.

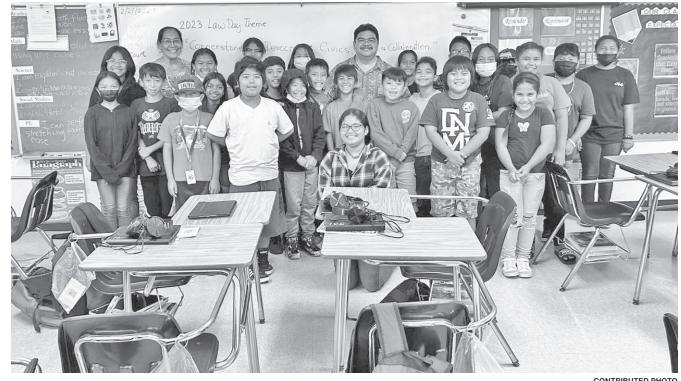
"The net amount of plaintiff Manibusan's claim against Ms. Larson, to which she submits and agrees to reduce judgment, is \$27,578.85," he said.

According to the AG's lawsuit against Larson and those similarly situated, he claims that the CNMI was harmed because of the authorized overtime pay received by Larson.

The OAG further argues that Larson was not entitled to overtime and so should be directed to return all the money she was paid in overtime.

According to the lawsuit, Larson's total compensation in fiscal years 2019 and 2020 exceeded her statutory salary of \$70,000, which is against the law.

Camacho visits Kagman Elementary as part of NMI Judiciary program



Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho poses with fifth grade students at Kagman Elementary School and their teacher last Feb. 28, 2023, as part of the "Justices and Judges in the Classroom" program.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho went to Kagman Elementary School last Feb. 28, 2023, to meet with fourth- and fifthgrade students and discuss with them how the CNMI's judicial system works. The event was part of the "Jus-

tices and Judges in the Class- Day: Civics, Civility, and room" program, in which Collaboration. members of the bench visit schools every year to give students the chance to learn about the rule of law.

Camacho talked with the students about the annual

"Meeting with students is one of my favorite things to do as a judge, and the annual Justices and Judges in the Classroom event is a wonderful program. The topics we discuss theme for this year's Law are serious, but we do it in a way which is accessible for the children," he said.

Camacho said the students also enjoyed the chance to hold his 10-lb stainless steel gavel. Next week, Camacho plans to visit Dandan Elementary School as

Rota SBDC hosts first-ever Small Business Night.

CNMI Small Business Development Center at Northern Marianas College's Rota campus proudly hosted the first-ever Small Business Night last Feb. 23, 2023, with upwards of 400 residents attending the event.

The event featured both seasoned and upcoming local entrepreneurs and their products and services, including handcrafted products, baked goods, Rota merchandise, handmade accessories, a variety of food options, and more.

"As a new business, Bake Me Happy was excited to be invited as a vendor at the Rota Small Business Night. We were overwhelmed by the support of the Rota community and look forward to future opportunities to participate at SBDC events," said Chanelle Manglona, owner of Bake Me Happy.

The next Small Business NIght will be held on Tinian on Thursday, March 9, 2023,



The CNMI Small Business Development Center at Northern Marianas College's Rota campus recently held a small business night, which brought together close to 400 residents.

at the Fiesta Grounds, Tinian.

The Rota SBDC extends its sincere gratitude to the Office of Mayor Aubry Hocog and the Rota Municipal Council for providing logistical support. SBDC also thanks the small businesses and government agencies that partici-

pated in this event, including A&T 2 Enterprises, Island A Heart Retail/JTGA- GTS Construction, 5 G's Enterprise dba Hagu La'Mun, Bethel Enterprise, Bake Me Happy, NMI Assets, Kitty Blossom, KFAB Gifts, BDZ Mow & Throw, CNMI Department of Labor, and NMC's Community Development Institute.

SBDC provides free business counseling services, resources, and training to small business owners and entrepreneurs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. For more information, call (670) 237-6888. (*NMC*)

...and will hold similar event on Tinian tomorrow

The CNMI Small Business Development Center at Northern Marianas College's Tinian campus will have its first-ever Small Business Night on Thursday, March 9, 2023, from 5pm to 8pm at the Fiesta Grounds, Tinian.

The event will showcase both seasoned and upcoming local entrepreneurs and their products and services, giving them a platform to connect with the community and promote their businesses. A variety of vendors and information booths will be available for the public to visit, including Sweeties Korner, Tropics, Primos, J Hook Fish Vendor, Tinian Treasure, A Potter's Dream, crochetedbybella, LivInk, and Chelu Alynez Enterprises, Tinian Elementary School PTSA, and ASNMC Game Booth.

Patrons will also have the opportunity to visit information booths hosted by Voices of the CNMI and Tinian Mayor's Office.

"We are excited to host this first-ever event for small businesses on Tinian," Tinian SBDC director Benjamin "Huk" Borja said." This event will provide an opportunity for our local entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services to the community and help them grow their businesses."

The public will also enjoy performances by Tinian Elementary School Chamorro Club, Tinian Elementary School Class 1A & 2A, and other local talent.

Small businesses interested in participating in the event are encouraged to contact Borja at benjamin. borja@marianas.edu or call (670) 287-8281. (NMC)



One of the students holds Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho's 10-lb stainless steel gavel.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MVA-RFP-23-2030

Marianas Visitors Authority Office Space Lease

Submission /Closing Date: Submit sealed proposals to:

March 10, 2023 Time: 3:00PM ChST Marianas Visitors Authority Attn: Procurement Office Gold Beach Hotel Beach Rd., Garapan P.O. Box 500861 Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after February 22, 2023 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, Gold Beach Hotel, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00AM to 5:00PM ChST, Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference "MVA - RFP -23- 2030-MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICE SPACE LEASE".

Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified Courier mail service on or before March 10, 2023 and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Procurement Officer Mr. George A. Sablan in writing of their intent to submit in order to receive the additional seven (7) working days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. This notice of intent may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to +1-670-664-3237 or emailed to gsablan@mymarianas.com and must be received no later than 3:00PM, Chamorro Standard Time (ChST) on

/s/ Gloria C. Cavanagh Acting Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors /s/ Judy C. Torres

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY



MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG. Po Box 501055*Saipan*Mp*96950 PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962 Website: Www.cnmiports.com



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-006-23

FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED FIRM(S) SERVICING THE AIRPORT INDUSTRY AND SPECIALIZING IN AIRPORT FINANCE RELATED REVENUE PLANNING AND **DEVELOPMENT, AND PASSENGER FACILITY CHARGES**

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA), a public Corporation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, hereby requests proposals from qualified and experienced firm(s) servicing the airport industry and specializing in airport finance, related revenue planning and development, and passenger facility charges. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluate by price alone (NMIAC \$4.06.0.326.).

The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning February 15, 2023, at the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the RFP Backage. All responses to this RFP shall take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged the proposer awarded for this project. Proposers shall also take into consideration all necessary badging

Questions regarding this procurement should be submitted in writing to Christopher S. Tenorio, Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority either by facsimile, or email cpa.receptionist@pticom.com with copy to skye.hofschneider@cnmiports.com on or before March 09, 2023.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Professional Services to provide Approposal shall be sealed and inflamed on the cover package outside as follows. The estimate of the Apport Finance, Related Revenue Planning and Development, and Passenger Facility Charges, Project No. CPA-RF-006-23". One (1) original and two (2) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. Local Time, March 20, 2023, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile (fax) transmission will not be considered. Any proposals received after the submittal deadline shall be rejected and returned unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO

Executive Director

Date .

NMC business students compete in energy competition

Four of Northern Marianas College's School of Business students have advanced to the regional competition of the EnergyTech University Prize 2023. The competition is organized by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Technology Transitions and encourages students to develop business plans utilizing high-potential energy technologies.

NMC School of Business faculty adviser Dr. Yunzi Zhang expressed pride in the team, which is composed of team captain Christine Beceril and team members Anushi Joshi, Duncan Laxa, and Eva Levina. The students submitted the abstract of their business presentation in January 2023 and were invited to participate in the regional competition.

The team, which is named



Northern Marianas College business students recently competed in the EnergyTech University Prize 2023, which is organized by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Technology Transitions and encourages students to develop business plans utilizing high-potential

energy technologies. From left are team members Anushi Joshi, Eva Levina, Christine Beceril, and Duncan Laxa.

Garapan students talk tourism careers with MTEC, MVA

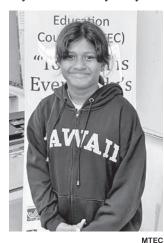


Students at Garapan Elementary School explored tourism careers with the Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority last March 1.

MTEC and the MVA aim to visit all public schools this school year with the message, "Tourism is Everybody's Business." As part of their presentation, students learned about careers in travel and tourism. MTEC also highlighted local managers who have risen through the ranks in the fields of hotel management, culinary, tour operation, and more. Following the presentation, students had the opportunity to earn giveaways by naming careers in tourism and other facts they had learned.

The MTEC presentation includes information on the number visitor arrivals, source markets, travel motivations, the benefits of tourism, and ideas on how students can engage with tourism. The MVA presentation covers the mandate of the office and the work of its divisions, especially marketing and community

"We find it important to share all these information and knowledge with our students to allow them to better understand how tourism plays a vital role in the CNMI's economy and to give them an opportunity to think of ways they can



Losau Mality of Garapan Elementary School is part of a dance group that entertains tourists at I Love Saipan, as she shares at a presentation of Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority on March 1, 2023, at her school.

be part of this role," said MVA Community Projects specialist Jack Aranda.

Aranda was joined by Acting MTEC chair Vicky Benavente and MTEC board member Catherine Perry.

Other MTEC board members are Martin Duenas (MVA), Dr. Galvin Guerrero



Janali Dizon of Garapan Elementary School learns at the presentation of Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority on March 1, 2023, that her dream of becoming an accountant can also support the Marianas tourism industry.

(Northern Marianas College), Larry Lee, Naomi Nishimura (CNMI Public School System), Glenn Policare (Kanoa Resort Saipan), and Gordon Marciano (PDI). Dr. Yunzi Zhang of Northern Marianas College School of Business also volunteers with the council. (*MTEC*)



Dylan Legaspi of Garapan Elementary School would prefer being a pilot to support tourism at the presentation of Marianas Tourism Education Council and Marianas Visitors Authority on March 1, 2023, at the school.

"Solar Marianas," competed in the South Central and U.S. Island Region via Zoom on Feb. 28, 2023, against other institutions, including American Samoa Community College, and other state universities, such as the University of Kansas and Mississippi State University. The participating students represent various degree programs mainly in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields. Past national winners of the competition included institutions with extremely strong STEM focus, such as Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Our team consists of from the upstudents per-class and freshman class, representing diverse backgrounds," Zhang said. "Through this competition, we'd like to expand the conventional understanding of STEM disciplines. Business analytics and organizational psychology are allied fields of the core STEM disciplines. Our business students' participation in a national competition themed in energy technologies echoes this."

In the team's presentation, the students will be exploring the usage of binary cultivation in photobioreactors proposed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to launch local production of high-value food materials, such as protein products, vitamins, and animal foods as well as biofuels in the Northern Mariana Islands. The technology will enable the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and relevant agencies to transform solar power and municipal waste to reliable energy sources dedicated for consumer products production.

"Our students have the ambition to address energy-related challenges that our community faces," Zhang said. "The Solar Marianas Business Initiative expects to play a paramount role in cultivating energy resilience in the American Pacific Insular areas, reducing the reliance on imported diesel energy, and building indigenous and local pride among the residents."

For more information about NMC's business program, visit www.marianas. edu. (*NMC*)

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free webinars this month. Webinars are held every Thursday from 10am to 11:30am via Zoom. Zoom links are emailed to all registered attendees 30 minutes before the webinar.

- March 9, 2023 How to Get 8(a) Certified - The 8(a) program is a business development program for companies owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The Guam PTAC will discuss eligibility, the online application, and follow-up documentation.
- March 16, 2023 -How to Get WOSB Certified - The Women-Owned Small Business program encourages women to pursue Federal contracts in historically, male dominated industries. We will discuss the online certification process as well as supporting

document requirements.

- March 23, 2023 Mentor-Protégé Programs SBA and DOD Mentor-Protégé programs allow small businesses to team up with large businesses without running afoul of affiliation regulations. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for both programs.
- March 30, 2023 How to Get SDVOSB Certified - SBA recently took over Service-Disabled an-Owned Small Business Certification from the VA. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements for SBA's newest certification.

Register on our website: https://www.guamptac.com/ news-and-events.php. (PR)

Filmmaker shares Micronesian shipwreck dive experiences

chrystal_marino@saipantibune.com

Photojournalist and filmmaker Mike Gerken shared his experiences diving among famous World War II shipwrecks in Chuuk to an audience of interested history buffs and diving enthusiasts last Friday at the VFW Post 3457 in Garapan.

With a visit to friends bringing him to Saipan, Gerken was invited to the VFW to share his experiences diving the Micronesian shipwrecks of Chuuk, and his amazing collection

Ninth Circuit civics contest deadline extended

Students residing in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington state, the U.S. territory of Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands can still submit their entries to compete in the 2023 Ninth Circuit Civics Contest, an essay and video competition for high school students. Extended deadline is Monday, March 20. Entries must be received by 11:59pm Pacific Time.

The theme of the contest is "The 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution: What Should Our Next Amendment Be?" The contest asks students to address three questions: (1) What amendment would you propose for our Constitution? (2) Why? and (3) How would you get your amendment ratified?

A total of \$11,400 in cash prizes will be awarded at the circuit level. The top three finishers in both the essay and video competitions will each receive a total of \$3,000 for first place, \$1,700 for second place and \$1,000 for third place. First-place winners at the circuit level will be invited to attend the 2023 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. Many students also have a chance to win cash prizes in local competitions sponsored by the individual judicial districts that will select their finalists for the circuit-wide contest. More information is available on the civics contest website at https://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest.

The contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit's Public Information and Community Outreach Committee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. district and bankruptcy courts in the 15 judicial districts that comprise the Ninth Circuit. Finalists will be announced in May and the winners in June. (PR)



Photojournalist and filmmaker Mike Gerken shared his experiences diving among the famous World War II shipwrecks in Chuuk to an audience of interested history buffs and diving enthusiasts last Friday at the VFW Post 3457 in Garapan.

of underwater footage that also led up to one of his several documentary films called The Wrecks of Truk Lagoon (2011). Gerken showed an excerpt of his film, which gave an in-depth look at WWII's Operation HAILSTONE, a 1944 battle in the outer island of Chuuk called Tonowas or Dublon, and the many ship and several plane wrecks that resulted from the U.S. attack on the Japanese station there. Gerken shared that, as a

captain of the Truk Odyssey for Odyssey Adventures, he would constantly travel back and forth to Chuuk and conduct countless diving tours in the wrecks for work, but it was during the COVID-19 pandemic-when he was stuck on the island because of border protection and with an immense time on his hands—that he really went further in exploring the wrecks and capturing a more of his amazing footage. Gerken also shared some rare footage

he'd taken when he explored "ghost-like" ships, from dozens of cargo with unexploded ammunition and bombs, to intact Japanese trucks and unassembled plane parts that were being transported aboard the ships. He took lengthy footage inside the ships' tight-spaced engine rooms, with much of formerly used equipment still standing in place even after decades of being underwater. Diving among the wrecks were also memorable, with beautiful marine

life highlighting the soft corals, Gerken said.

In a span of two years, Gerken not only had the opportunity to further explore the wrecks and collect footage, but also helped the Chuuk government in distributing thousands of COVID-19 vaccines throughout the islands in the lagoon. "After a year of being stuck in Truk, my boss volunteered the Odyssey to the state of Chuuk to deliver personnel and vaccine supplies

to the dozens of islands inside the lagoon, and it was a monumental task because of the isolated geography of all these villages, the sheer number of them. So suddenly I had a purpose again, I was feeling a little bit depressed and now I had a job, I had purpose, and we set out for the next two years vaccinating nearly the entire population of Chuuk," he said. "I tip my hat to all the different teams that came out on the Odyssey. They worked hard to protect their population and it worked. Eventually Truk Lagoon, Chuuk, reopened with minimal casualties...'

Before closing his presentation, Gerken shared a comparison of drone footage of the Dublon island right after the World War II attack versus how the island looks currently.

Gerken is a professional underwater photojournalist, documentary filmmaker, as well as a boat captain and expedition tour leader for Evolution Underwater Imaging & Dive Travel. To reach out to Gerken you can contact him at mike@evolutionunderwater.com, or go to www. evolutionunderwater.com.

The Truk Lagoon, or Chuuk lagoon in FSM is among one of the top destinations for shipwreck-divers as it has more than 40 World War II-era ships in its waters.

USCG, partners welcome first cruise ships to visit Guam since pandemic

SANTA RITA, Guam—The U.S. Coast Guard, Port of Guam, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Police, Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency, Guam Police Department, and other federal agencies worked together last Feb. 24 and March 3, 2023, to welcome the first cruise ships to Guam since the territory reopened following the COVID 19 pandemic.

633-foot The Bahamas-flagged MS Amadea called on Guam on Feb. 24, while the 951-foot United Kingdom-flagged MS Diamond Princess arrived on March 3.

U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor, alongside the Guam Police Department Marine Unit, provided an escort into and out of the port. U.S. Customs and Border Protection also conducted operations for the arrival of the *Amadea*, as it was arriving from a non-U.S. port. The U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam Sector Boarding Team, and in the case of the Diamond Princess, augmented by members of Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu, along with vessel and facility examiners from the Prevention Division, attended the vessels to ensure safety



CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR The 951-foot United Kingdom-flagged MS Diamond Princess arrives in Guam on March 3, 2023.

and security for the passengers, crew, and Port of Guam.

"The officers and crews of both the Amadea and Diamond Princess were very accommodating, and everything was in order. They recently had a full certificate of compliance inspection by our team in American Samoa. The Diamond Princess was last in Honolulu coming from the West Coast," said Lt. j.g. Ronell Rivera, supervisor of the Sector Boarding Team. "We appreciate the strong relationships with all our island partners. The success of the evolutions is a testament to the planning and work ahead of time by all parties. Everyone's goal was to ensure the safety and security of the port while making it as smooth a process for the visiting vessel's crew and passengers as possible."

While aboard the vessels, the U.S. Coast Guard team walked all decks looking for any security issues, and examined all relevant paperwork. for the vessel since leaving a foreign or non-U.S. port requiring a visit from the U.S. Coast Guard. The vessel inspectors from the prevention team also conducted a spot check on the vessel. At the same time, their facility side colleagues assessed the measures the port staff took to ensure the safety and security of any disembarking crew or passengers and the port itself. The U.S. Coast Guard team remained on hand to assist with shoreside security

until the ships departed. The two ships comprise a total capacity for around 3,290 guests and 1,390 crew, though they were not at maximum occupancy. Pre-COVID, Guam aver-In the case of the *Amadea*, aged about five cruise ships this was the first U.S. port a year. Another three cruise ship visits are anticipated this calendar year. The port reportedly continues to improve accommodations for the small cruise ship industry and tourism. According to Guam's Economic Development Authority, tourism is Guam's top industry generating \$1.4 billion for the economy and supporting as many as 18,000 jobs. A 2020 report from the Guam Visitors Bureau stated the tourism industry, directly and indirectly, accounted for 60 percent of Guam's total revenues.

"The U.S. Coast Guard's role in the tourism industry is to ensure compliance with applicable regulations for any water or port-related activities and the safety of all waterway users," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Being a good partner and supporting our industry and response partners is at the forefront of what we do to ensure a safe and vibrant Guam."

U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam comprises nearly 300 personnel throughout the response, prevention, administrative, and logistics departments supporting the Joint Rescue Sub-Center, three fast response cutters, a small boat station, and a marine safety detachment in Saipan. The unit provides a significant portion of the U.S. Coast Guard's enduring regional presence serving the people of the Pacific by conducting our six major operational mission programs: maritime law enforcement, maritime response, maritime prevention, marine transportation system management, maritime security operations, and defense operations. (USCG)

8 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

Opinion



Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

Ap The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

What insulin should cost: Eli Lilly comes through for Americans with diabetes

hearty thank you to Eli Lilly, one of the planet's top three producers of insulin, for slashing the price of its most widely prescribed form of insulin by 70% while capping related out-of-pocket costs at \$35 a month. That means diabetics with private insurance will now pay costs on par with the congressionally mandated rate for Medicare beneficiaries set at the start of the year.

More than 30 million Americans —that's one in 11 of us —have diabetes; upwards of 7 million of us require daily insulin. And according to researchers at Yale, among those who need it every day, 14% are paying a whopping 40% or more of their post-subsistence income, meaning what's left after housing and food costs are taken care of, on the drug.

If that doesn't get your blood pressure up, this should: Though credible independent analysts have estimated that a vial of insulin costs between \$3 and \$7 to manufacture, as of 2018, the average price per vial of insulin in the U.S. was \$98.70, according to an analysis by the RAND Corp. In Japan? \$14.40. In Canada? \$12. In Germany, France and the U.K.? \$11, \$9 and \$7.50, respectively. And no, Americans don't get supersized vials.

Fixing this ought not be partisan. In 2020, President Donald Trump unveiled a plan to cap insulin costs for seniors, but, probably because the rightwing of his party would've howled "socialism," it was a voluntary program with extremely limited reach. Upon assuming office in 2021, Joe Biden yanked the Trump rule and started anew, winning a \$35-per-vial cap for seniors in the Inflation Reduction Act last year and now pushing in this year's State of the Union speech for a universal insulin price limit.

At least at the moment, Congress looks unlikely to budge —which is why Lilly's move is welcome. Other manufacturers have a choice: cling to their current price structure for as long as they can, or get with the program.

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Want to make drugs, including insulin, affordable? End patent abuse

By JOSHUA SKYDEL and RESHMA RAMACHANDRAN THE BALTIMORE SUN

rugmaker Eli Lilly on Wednesday said it will drop prices on some versions of insulin, and cap monthly out-of-pocket costs at \$35 per product for insured individuals not covered by Medicare's prescription drug program, which also maintains a \$35 cap. The welcome move comes as lawmakers in both major parties seek to control rising drug prices, but our patients and the rest of the country can't afford to rely on the good will of the pharmaceutical industry to stem the crisis. That will take legislation. In the meantime, there are actions that U.S. patent- and drugregulators can take now.

As President Joe Biden noted in his recent State of the Union address, the inventor of insulin "didn't even patent it because he wanted it to be available for everyone." It is true that Frederick Banting and his co-inventors sold the patent for insulin to the University of Toronto for \$1 each in 1923, stating, "Insulin does not belong to me, it belongs to the world." It is also true that in the 100 years since that sale, the price of insulin has risen dramatically, as manufacturers have used the U.S. patent system to maintain exclusive rights over a variety of insulin products that account for billions of dollars in annual drug spending.

Current practices in the U.S. patent system incentivize companies to maximize the number of patents sought for drugs and biologics, creating "patent thickets" that enable aggressive litigation of patent infringement claims against generic versions of their products. Too frequently, these new patents represent incremental changes of little novelty, such as an update on an insulin autoinjector that does not clearly improve safety or efficacy for patients. Such maneuvers are legal, and often extend exclusivity for brand-name products beyond the expiration of their original patents, while delaying for years sometimes the availability of lower-cost, generic versions of their drugs.

That leads to difficult decisions. As many as one in four Americans has difficulty affording their prescriptions, and one in 10 has rationed drugs because of their cost. These decisions are borne most heavily by older, sicker and lower-income Americans, who in some cases risk life-altering consequences by forgoing essential medications. Diabetic patients without insurance, for example, are more likely to be prescribed older versions of insulin, which are less expensive but can lead to poorer diabetes

control and greater risk of side effects.

As practicing physicians, we have found ourselves strategizing over which medication option might be least costly to our patients or prescribing necessary, high-cost medications while knowing patients may struggle to afford them. These problems are compounded when we cannot count on generic drugs and biosimilars (generic versions of biologics) to predictably become available after brand-name products have been marketed for years. When patients must choose between their physical and financial well-being, harm is unavoidable.

Building on their commitment to collaborate to reduce anticompetitive practices in drug development, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the Food and Drug Administration can take several steps to reduce the unnecessary extension of patent regimes for approved drugs and biologics.

First, information sharing between USPTO and FDA should be formalized, to eliminate loopholes through which discrepant statements can be made separately to each agency. FDA already has the authority to publicly disclose full regulatory dossiers, and pathways could be developed to give USPTO access to information needed to evaluate claims of novelty while still protecting trade secrets.

FDA can also directly assist USPTO to assess pharmaceutical patent claims. Training on the use of publicly available FDA resources, supported by FDA's scientific and technical expertise, will help patent examiners to corroborate the reported quality of evidence and the timing of key claims arising from the development of new products, to ensure that patent applications are truly new, novel and non-obvious.

Finally, USPTO should seek proactive public input on applications for new patents over approved drugs and biologics. Similar to how FDA convenes independent experts to address issues related to drug development in their regulatory reviews, USP-TO could bring together independent stakeholders—such as patient advocates, academic experts, health professionals, and other representatives without financial conflicts of interest—to provide commentary on the real-world novelty and utility of claimed "inventions." These expert panels could also assist USPTO and FDA to translate between aspects of claimed therapeutic benefit, such as "first-in-class" and "clinical benefit," and USPTO's standards for awarding new patents, such as "novelty," "usefulness" and "non-obviousness." A shared language among all stakeholders will be critical to identifying

See DRUGS on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit sub-

missions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Toward gender equality in Micronesia

he needles of gender equality in the Micronesia region have finally started moving. A region that until recently could not get the attention it deserved—where gender equality was not top of the agenda, where Sustainable Development Goals remained stagnant for a long time—is now advancing toward the 2030 agenda. The recent announcement, regarding the development of a Gender Equality Framework by 2025, made by the Micronesian Islands Forum, a body

consisting of heads of the state of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, and Nauru, is a major step toward a joint pathway to achieve 2030 agenda and sustainable development across the entire Micronesian region. A game changer—I would call it—as it will leverage our shared development efforts and will have a positive impact on the entire Pacific region.

As the UN resident coordinator for Micronesia, I feel honored with the decisions made during the 21st Micronesian Presidents' Summit—a summit where the heads of the state acknowledged the role of the UN and expressed their continued commitment toward gender equality, the 2030 agenda, and the "One UN Micronesia House," which will pave the way for the UN to enhance its local support to the host governments with gender-focused and inclusive development.

The gender equality and parity numbers for the Pacific including Micronesia require our immediate attention. Gender-based violence rates in the Pacific are among the highest in the world, with up to 68% of women compared to the global average of 30% facing some form of physical violence in their lifetime. The GBV rates are alarmingly high in the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 59%, and 48% respectively, which calls for more strategic and gender-focused reforms by all stakeholders. Leveraging avenues such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or CEDAW, may help in achieving some quick wins, especially in Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Women and girls are a significant size of the population in Micronesia, however least represented in the workforce, especially in digital and technology. Women's participation in the workforce is also mainly concentrated in the health and education sectors. It's only in Palau where women hold 31% of managerial positions in science and technology. Enhancing their representation at all levels is key to sustainable development and winning the race. A race that cannot be won when half of the team is sitting outside.

Realizing the need for a more proactive approach toward gender equality and other development needs of the region, the Micronesian governments requested and lobbied for tailored support from the UN and other development partners. Though some of the UN agencies and development partners were already on the ground providing lifesaving support, capacity building, and disaster response, the need for a coordinated approach was always felt.

In 2021, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appointed me as the resident coordinator for Micronesia, to join forces with the heads of the state to enhance efforts toward the 2030 agenda that among other developments would result in women empowerment, elimination of all forms of violence against women, girls, and marginal-

By JAAP VAN HIERDEN

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaap van Hierden is the resident coordinator for the United Nations in Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Kiribati. As the designated representative of the UN secretary-general in Micronesia, the UN resident



coordinator guides UN's engagement in development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding activities in five Micronesian countries.

ized groups, strengthening social protection, enabling gender equality, and ensuring human rights.

To deliver on our commitments, the UN closely worked with the government, civil society, and development partners to draw broader contours of our development approach—the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027. The UNSDCF is signed and endorsed by all 14 Pacific countries, including the five Micronesian countries, and serves as a testimony of the strong partnership between the host governments and the UN. Over the next five years, the UNSDCF will help to leverage our development work in the four interlinked areas: Planet, People, Prosperity, and Peace, to ensure that no one is left behind, that people are equal and free to exercise their fundamental rights, to promote gender equality and peace, and to enable nations and their communities to become resilient to existential threats allowing them to live in harmony within the blue continent.

We are working on the country implementation plans to align our actions with the development priorities within each of the five Micronesian countries. We take it as an opportunity to support governments in making inclusive, gender-focused, and evidence-based actions to make sure women, girls and marginalized groups remain top of the agenda in every aspect of development.

The UN family will continue to provide support through its global exposure and expertise, leveraging and developing linkages in the region and introducing innovations in each sector to modernize systems and ensure a sustainable future—a future that defeats climate change, eliminates gender-based violence, enables healthy communities, and ensures that Micronesian children, particularly girls, are well-educated with well-paying jobs available to them locally, a future that protects human rights and free speech for all, and a future that will increase women's participation in the economy, politics, and policymaking.

In doing so, the United Nations supports the efforts of the governments of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, and the Republic of Kiribati in ensuring that the fruits of development will benefit all its citizens.

On International Women's Day

LITERARY NOOK

BY JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



ere are four excerpts from poems by women poets from the Philippines, Ukraine, China, and Ireland. They are all parts of longer poems. It is my hope readers and teachers will seek out biographies and poems of these notable 20th century women in honor of International Woman's Day.

Philippines: Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta (1932 - 2010) was a Filipina poet, author, editor, teacher. She is the winner of many awards. Her poems have been translated into Russian, Japanese and Italian.

"... claw at the same straws pore over the same jigsaws trying to make heads or tails you take the edges
I take the center keeping fancy guard loving beyond what is there you sling at the stars
I bedeck the weeds."

Ukraine: Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966) was born in Ukraine, lived most of her life in Odessa, died in Moscow. Survived Josef Stalin's purges. She is considered the greatest woman poet in Russian literature.

"I have lit my treasured candles, one by one to hallow this night. With you, who do not come, I wait for the birth of the year. Dear God!"

China: Qiu Jin (1875 -1907) was a Chinese poet, essayist, fiction writer, feminist activist, and revolutionary.

"Don't speak of how women can't become heroes: alone, I rode the winds eastward for ten-thousand leagues. My poetic ponderings expanded, a sail between sky and sea, dreaming of Japan's three islands, delicate jade under moonlight."

Ireland: Evangeline Patterson (1928-2000) was born and raised a Protestant in predominantly Roman Catholic Dublin, Ireland. She says, "... I think poetry should reach beyond sex, politics, class and all the other barriers, to the level where we are all human beings trying to live our lives the best way we can in this bewildering world."

Here is an excerpt from her poem titled, Song For An Innocent:

"Born with such gentleness of you, with such a pure and trusting face, how could I tell you what I knew? This world is not your kind of place."



FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

A unit dedicated to the production of insulin pens at an Eli Lilly factory in Fegersheim, eastern France, on Oct. 12, 2015.

DRUGS

From Page 8

patent claims that represent true innovation.

Ultimately, new legislation will be required to limit the use of patents to indefinitely extend monopolies over drugs and biologics, toward which Congress has taken some initial steps. Until then, USPTO and FDA should seek every opportunity to ensure the U.S. patent system enables, rather than restricts, the development of truly effective and affordable medications.

Dr. Joshua Skydel (Twitter: @SkydelJ) is a resident physician in internal medicine at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and a member of the Doctors for America FDA Task Force. Dr. Reshma Ramachandran (Twitter: @reshmagar) is a family medicine physician and assistant professor at Yale School of Medicine. She co-directs the Yale Collaboration for Regulatory Rigor, Integrity and Transparency and chairs the FDA Task Force for the independent, national non-profit organization, Doctors for America.

10 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN **TODAY THURSDAY** FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY Scattered showers and A 30 percent chance of A chance of showers. A chance of showers. showers. Partly sunny thunderstorms. thunderstorms. Partly sunny. Partly sunny 84° 84° 75° 84° 76° 82° 75° 76° YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE

PICTURE TIME: 7:03 AM, TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery showed isolated showers over the Marianas this morning. A surface trough is located just west of the islands.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESI	A	▲ ▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:30 AM	6:25 PM
Thursday	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:26 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	6:54 AM	7:04 PM
Thursday	-	7:29 AM	7:51 PM
Friday	-	8:04 AM	8:41 PM
Saturday	-	8:40 AM	9:32 PM
Sunday	-	9:20 AM	10:26 PM

DAY	MOUNKISE	MOONSET	MOUNKISE
Today	-	6:54 AM	7:04 PM
Thursday	-	7:29 AM	7:51 PM
Friday	-	8:04 AM	8:41 PM
Saturday	-	8:40 AM	9:32 PM
Sunday	-	9:20 AM	10:26 PM

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AROUND THE	GLOBE	≜ ♥°F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	72° / 59°
Beijing	Sunny	45° / 21°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	73° / 63°
Honolulu	Showers	82° / 73°
London	Sunny	43° / 34°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 53°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 77°
Melbourne	Rain	66° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 71°
New York	Showers	53° / 36°
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	39° / 28°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	48° / 36°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	55° / 39°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	70° / 54°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 48°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	45° / 32°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	50° / 39°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	54° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET				
2:21 AM	Low Tide	0.02		
8:45 AM	High Tide	1.72		
2:43 PM	Low Tide	0.68		
8:10 PM	High Tide	1.74		

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2023

		00.12			•	11 1, 2	0_0
	DEPA	RTURES			ARF	RIVALS	
SAIPAN-	GUAM (GI	UM)		GUAM (G	iUM)-SAII	PAN	
UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily	UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily
SAIPAN-	NARITA ((NRT)		NARITA	(NRT)-SA	IPAN	
UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5	UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7
GUAM-M	IANILA (M	INL)		MANILA	(MNL)-GU	IAM	
PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily	PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau	UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily	UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
			,	UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
							,
SAIPAN-	MANILA ((MNL)		MANILA	(MNL)-SA	IPAN	
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via	UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
			Guam	UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam,				via Guam
			Palau	UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau,
							Guam
SAIPAN-	INCHEON	(ICN)		INCHEON	I (ICN)-SA	MPAN	
TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7	7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	4, 7	TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily	TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 6
LEGEND: Do	we: Monday	(1) Tuesday (2) Modnosday (3)	Thursday (4)	Friday (5) S	aturday (6) and	d Sunday (7): IIA

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023

SAIPAN TO	D TINIAN	
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M. 3:40 P.M.	11:38 A.M. 3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.		6,7
SAIPAN TO	O ROTA	
DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M. 7:40 A.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.W. 3:00 P.M.		6,7 6,7
SAIPAN TO	D GUAM	
SAIPAN TO DEPARTS	O GUAM ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M. 8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. 11:00 A.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. 11:00 A.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M. 8:00 P.M. 12:00 P.M. 6:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. 11:00 A.M. 5:00 P.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M. 8:00 P.M. 12:00 P.M. 6:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7
DEPARTS 12:00 P.M. 2:00 P.M. 7:00 P.M. 11:00 A.M. 5:00 P.M.	ARRIVES 1:00 P.M. 3:00 P.M. 8:00 P.M. 12:00 P.M. 6:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7 6,7

TINIAN TO	SAIPAN	
12:00 P.M. 4:20 P.M.	ARRIVES 12:18 P.M. 4:38 P.M. 10:38 A.M.	FREQUENCY 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7
ROTA TO S	SAIPAN	
10:20 A.M. 6:00 P.M. 8:40 A.M.	ARRIVES 11:00 A.M. 6:40 P.M. 9:20 A.M. 4:40 P.M.	FREQUENCY 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7 6,7
GUAM TO	SAIPAN	
1:30 P.M. 5:30 P.M. 9:00 P.M. 12:30 P.M. 6:30 P.M.		FREQUENCY 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6,7 6,7
GUAM TO	ROTA	
DEPARTS 9:25 A.M. 3:30 P.M.	ARRIVES 10:00 A.M. 4:05 P.M.	FREQUENCY 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN	TO ROTA				
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY		
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily		
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri		
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/ Sat/Sun		
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily		
ROTA TO GUAM					

1401 H	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
SAIPAN	TO TINIA	N	
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily

JAIFAN	I O I IINIA	1	
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA T	O SAIPAN		
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/
			Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily
			-

GUAM TO ROTA										
LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY							
301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri							

TINIAN	TO SAIPA	N	
FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily



Celebrating women and their advocacies

By TERI FLORES CORRESPONDENT

ore than a century ago March 1857, 15,000 women from the textile industry joined forces with women activists to march on the streets of New York City to push for better working conditions and the right to vote. This day of protest was said to be the inspiration that sparked the movement known originally as "National Women's Day," with Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland becoming the first countries that celebrated International Women's Day.

Throughout its century-

old history, IWD's popularity waned and ebbed with the success of the suffrage movement in the '20s and the rise of feminism in the '60s. Backed by United Nations sponsorship in the '70s, IWD has now evolved into an important global occasion promoting women's rights and issues and honoring women's successes and achievements in all sectors of society.

In this special supplement, Saipan Tribune pays homage to five outstanding women from our community who have broken the proverbial glass ceiling. These women excel in their respective career fields while giving back to the community through their commu-



Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others.

-Amelia Earhart

nity work and advocacies.

Get to know the executive comptroller of Triple J Enterprises, Kina Peter, and her guiding principles to success; Arley Gutierrez Long and her story of how she and her family of five established the CNMI's first food bank, the Ohala Foundation;

Joann Aquino, who shares how she manages to juggle both her government job and volunteer work; while Ms. Northern Marianas Savannah Delos Sants talks about her experience as the first local beauty queen who bagged a spot in the Top 15 of the 2021 Miss

International pageant. We also get to learn from Senior Master Sqt. Edrianne Flores how she balances life and work while taking on the responsibility of running the Command Law Office for Headquarters of the Pacific Air Forces in Hawaii.

While major strides have

been made to promote parity and the rights of women in all sectors of our society, a lot of work still needs to be done to break the barriers of gender inequality. By sharing the stories of these five women, may we continue to inspire and empower others to strive for equity while celebrating their brilliance.

From one woman who broke the glass ceiling of the aviation industry Amelia Earhart—"Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

Be inspired!



Kina B. Peter sees work-life balance as a worthy goal

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

fact of modern life is that finding work-life balance these days is now more of an aspiration rather than the norm. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, though, many of us are consciously making the choice to pursue and achieve this state of equilibrium.

Kina B. Peter, Triple J Enterprises Saipan's corporate controller, shares that being transparent and realistic of her priorities as a mother and as an employee had helped her hit this elusive work-life balance.

"When I needed to take time off in the middle of the day to tend to my kids' school events or award ceremonies, I did that. It meant that I needed to shift my work schedule to ensure that my tasks were completed. It also meant that I needed to be open and honest with my team and leaders at work about my schedule and deadlines."

In return, Peter makes sure she lives up to her work commitments to ensure she completes her tasks. "When I am committed to tasks, you can expect that I will follow through."

Having a strong support system both at home and at work also allowed her to overcome the challenges of making it in the corporate world. "I had a support system at home as well as having a good working relationship with my team. Both are critical for success."

Peter believes it is critical to have a strong family support in order for women to achieve success in their chosen careers. "Women in most cases are made to feel obligated to maintain a stable household in order to have a family and a successful career path. I see it as having a household where you have partner (my husband) that supports my growth and development all around—at home and with my career."

By clearly defining the goals she has set for both her career and personal life, Peter is able to successfully fulfill her role as a mother and as a corporate executive. "Growing and developing my accounting and finance career to get to where I am today resulted from learning to create a work-life balance that allowed me to be the wife and super mom I wanted to be while managing to achieve my career goals and aspirations."

In her present capacity as corporate controller in one of the biggest family-owned businesses in Micronesia, Peter plays a key role in Triple J's executive team, overseeing the company's accounting and financial reporting functions. Aside from the fulfillment she gets in being part of a progressive company



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Kina B. Peter is Triple J Enterprises Saipan's corporate controller.

known for its integrity and operational excellence, Peter is excited to meet the challenges her new corporate role will bring.

A certified public accountant, Peter was part of corporate America where she spent over 20 years gaining in-depth global accounting and finance experience in the aviation and aerospace industry. Peter became the CNMI's first female Public Auditor in December 2020, a post she took after she and her husband decided to move their family back to Saipan after spending two decades living overseas. Peter is known among her peers and close friends for being passionate about her job and as one who works hard to complete her projects. When not at work, Peter can be found in the kitchen baking goodies, a hobby that she picked up from her mom.

An alumna of the University of Portland's Pamplin School of Business, Peter was influenced by both of her grandparents as well as her father to study business. "I grew up at the family farm in Marpi and As Teo, so naturally I was motivated to major in business." She veered into accounting via the influence one of her college professors, who motivated his business students to get an accounting degree and sit for the CPA exam, which is what she did.

Peter's career in accounting has Continued on Page 15

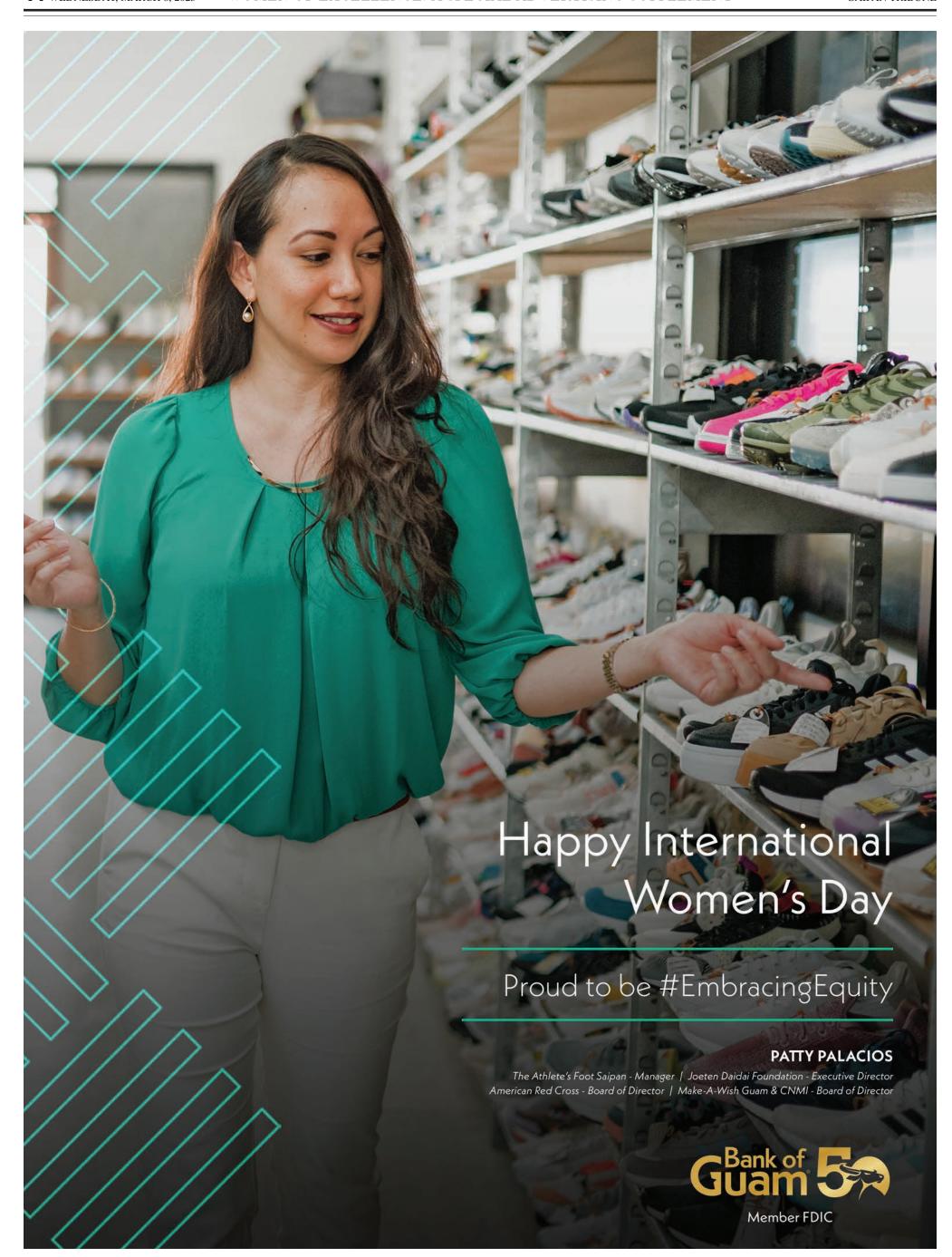


Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho
Mayor of Saipan and Staff

We believe in the power of women to transform the world. This International Women's Day, we're proud to celebrate the women who inspire us with their resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to progress.

Happy International Women's Day!





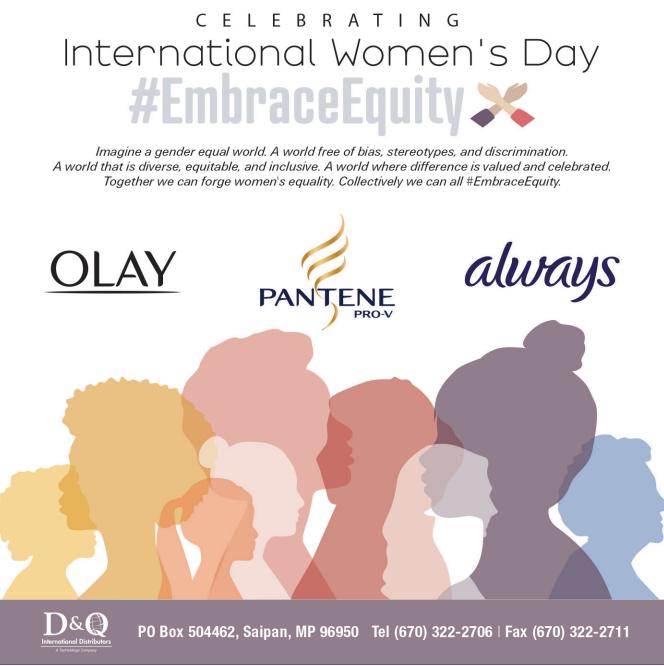
opened doors of opportunities that paved the way for both her professional and personal growth. "Aside from the 'bean counter' stereotype and the fact that I consider myself an introvert, my accounting career got me out of my comfort zone and challenged me to accept corporate assignments that required me to be more outspoken and lead organizations supporting key executives."

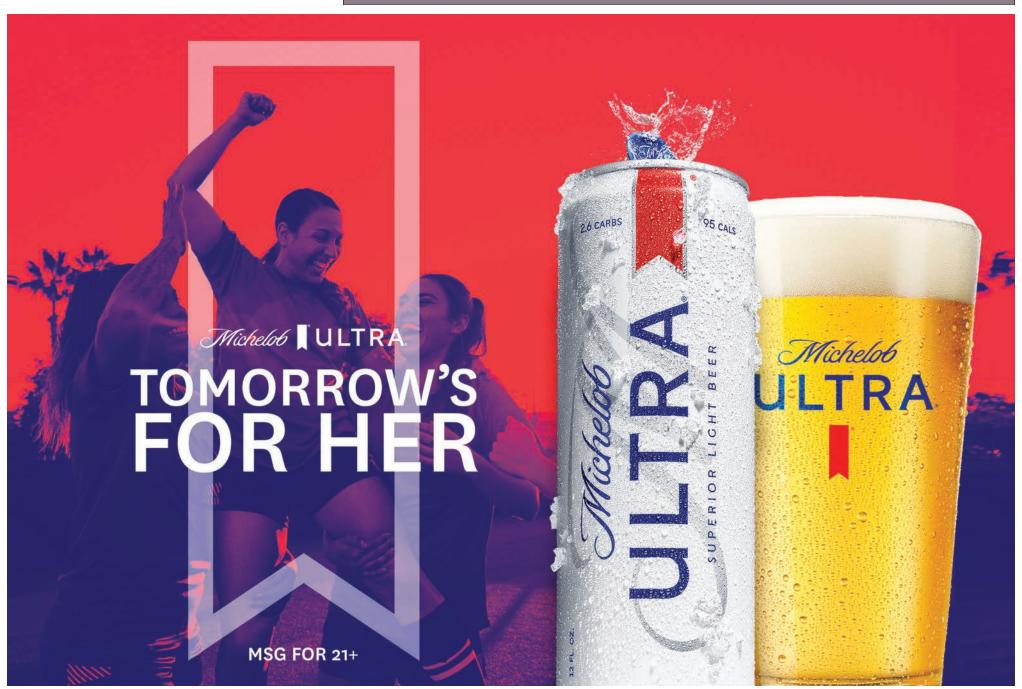
Peter credits her parents for the professional successes and the career opportunities she continues to enjoy. "My grandparents and parents were intentional in ensuring I pursue higher education studies. They made a commitment that I am afforded this opportunity. It did not matter what field of study I took on. What mattered was I pursued higher education." This experience has taught Peter the meaning behind the expression "Seize the day. "This experience really allowed me to see that, when we are given an opportunity, grab it and make the most of it because not everyone is fortunate enough to be given the opportunity."

Born and raised on Saipan, Peter is the eldest among the three children of the late Juan Santos Borja and Nikki Boki Babauta. Married to former House of Representatives member Mario T. Peter, they have two children, Kayannie and Maili, who are a senior and sophomore high school students, respectively. Completing their family are two special fur babies, Azuki and Otto.

Peter and her husband decided to relocate back to Saipan in the summer of 2020 to weather the CO-VID-19 pandemic. Not wanting to return to the U.S. mainland, Kayannie and Maili convinced their parents to allow them to stay and continue their studies on Saipan. "Their persistence made me feel that they also deserve the opportunity of growing up around family and learning our culture," said Peter.

For those who want to succeed in whatever endeavor they want to undertake, Peter has these nuggets of wisdom: "You can do what you want and get to where you want to be with hard work and perseverance. ... Short-term sacrifices are really long-term gains—put that into perspective. ... You are never too young to start and never too old to pursue your passion. Find what you enjoy doing and work hard to become better at it each day—find your purpose!"











To the women who are breaking the mold and redefining what it means to be a leader, innovator, and change-maker. Let's celebrate their achievements and continue supporting their journey towards success.

Happy International Women's Day!







By TERI M. FLORES

o n d e r W o m a n or Super Girl? Take your pick because her ability to multitask and to get the job done in time makes one think that she may just be gifted with superpowers. That's Joann Aquino for the rest of us mortal. She is one of Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang's trusted staff, an active volunteer in several of the CNMI's civic and nonprofit organizations; a mother, and soon to be, a grandmother.

As a civil servant, Aquino's job had always focused on operations and logistics. Armed with strict work ethics and her adeptness in manag-



Joann Aquino is currently a grants manager at the Office of Grants Management & State Clearinghouse.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve honors Joann Aquino in an event at the CNMI House of Representatives.

ing people, Aquino is able to ensure the efficient delivery of critical services—a definite "must" in public service. This is what makes her a valuable asset to any public official.

Anyone who knows Aquino will remember how she efficiently help manage the cleanup and disaster recovery activities of the Saipan Mayor's Office in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018. With her hard hat on, Aquino would visit disaster recovery sites while at the same time, coordinate the activities of National Guard members who were helping restore Saipan's typhoondamaged infrastructure.

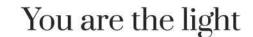
Starting her government

career with the CNMI Office of Aging, Aquino handled the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Later in 2014, she joined the Saipan Mayor's Office where she worked her way up to become the director of Field Operations until January 2023. When then-Mayor Apatang was elected as lieu-

tenant governor in 2022, he brought Aquino with him to the Office of Grants Management & State Clearinghouse as a grants manager.

Aquino is passionate about her job as a civil servant, especially because she is able to directly work for the public by implementing policies

Continued on Page 18



You enlighten the world with your smile. You spread that happiness all the while. When you want to play a role. You go beyond things to be. There is nothing beyond you to see. Such a powerful role you play in life. Being a woman, you are complete. Complete in every aspect of life. Wishing you a happy women's day!

























From Page 17

that ensure the delivery of efficient government services. "Working in the government allowed me great opportunities to meet and work with different individuals. The satisfaction I get is being able to collaborate and network with other agencies and departments to meet the common goal of delivering critical services to the public," she said.

When she was still at the Saipan Mayor's Office, Aquino was tasked to manage multiple field projects throughout the Municipality of Saipan for eight years. She oversaw the work of about 40 men which at first proved to be a challenge. "The challenge for me was to get these men to have confidence in my ability to lead, to get all of them to work as one unit, ensure that they are focused on the daily mission so they can successfully complete their assignments. In the end, I was able to gain their trust."

Aquino considers challenges "an opportunity to learn and grow. I focus on being positive, I remain calm in the face of adversity and try to find solutions."

Aquino believes that being a civil servant has enriched her life in ways that has inspired her to return the blessings back through



Joann Aquino poses with her family in this file photo.

her volunteer work.

As a volunteer, Aquino has assumed key responsibilities in four nonprofit organizations, which include CNMI Miss Earth, where she sits as a director, and as a member of the Soroptimist International of the Northern Marianas, which advocates for women and girls' rights to education and training to achieve economic empowerment.

Since 2019, Aquino has been an active Rotarian, first serving as director of Community Service for two years and now as the organization's secretary. She also spends time with the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve as its first female ombudsman in the CNMI.

"It has been six years now since I joined ESGR and I find the work very rewarding because I am able to take part in promoting cooperation and understanding between our service members and their employers," said Aquino. She joined the group as an homage to her family members who have served in the uniformed armed forces and to her son, who was a reservist with the Guam Army National Guard. She considers her volunteer work as a way to help improve the lives of those around her and as a means of personal growth.

Apart from her public persona, Aquino places premium value on her family and her "me" time. "Balancing CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

home, career, and volunteering can be quite time- and energy-consuming, but I've been very blessed to gain the support of my family and my employer. Juggling time for my different advocacies can seem overwhelming at times, but I feel that proper planning, scheduling, and communication is key. I also believe in self-care. I make time for myself by meditating, going to the salon and doing Zumba with friends."

Aquino is very proud of her family, who has supported her in all her endeavors. Married to Danny Aquino for 35 years, they are blessed with three children. Incidentally, Danny Aquino is also a civil servant himself and is the current head of the Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs and was the previous director of the CNMI Museum of History and Culture.

The Aquinos' children have now all left the coop and have carved their own paths in life. Their eldest child, Alicia, 33, holds a master's degree in Criminal Justice and works for the State of Oregon. She lives with her fiancé, Shae Myles, and they will soon give the Aquinos their first granddaughter. Their second son, Matthew, 31, holds a bachelor's degree in Health Science with concentration in exercise science and is currently working at the Fitness Center of the Naval Base in Guam. Married to the former Megan Dejesa, a physical therapist at the Guam Memorial Hospital, they have a son, Micah, who is the Aquinos' first grandchild. Zachary is the youngest and holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and currently works for the Bank of Guam.

As far as the future is concerned, Aquino sees herself continuing both her government job and volunteer work. "As a professional, I will continue to use my skills and knowledge to continue serving our community in whatever capacity I can. As a volunteer: I can still see myself



Joann Aquino volunteers with the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve as its first female ombudsman in the CNMI.

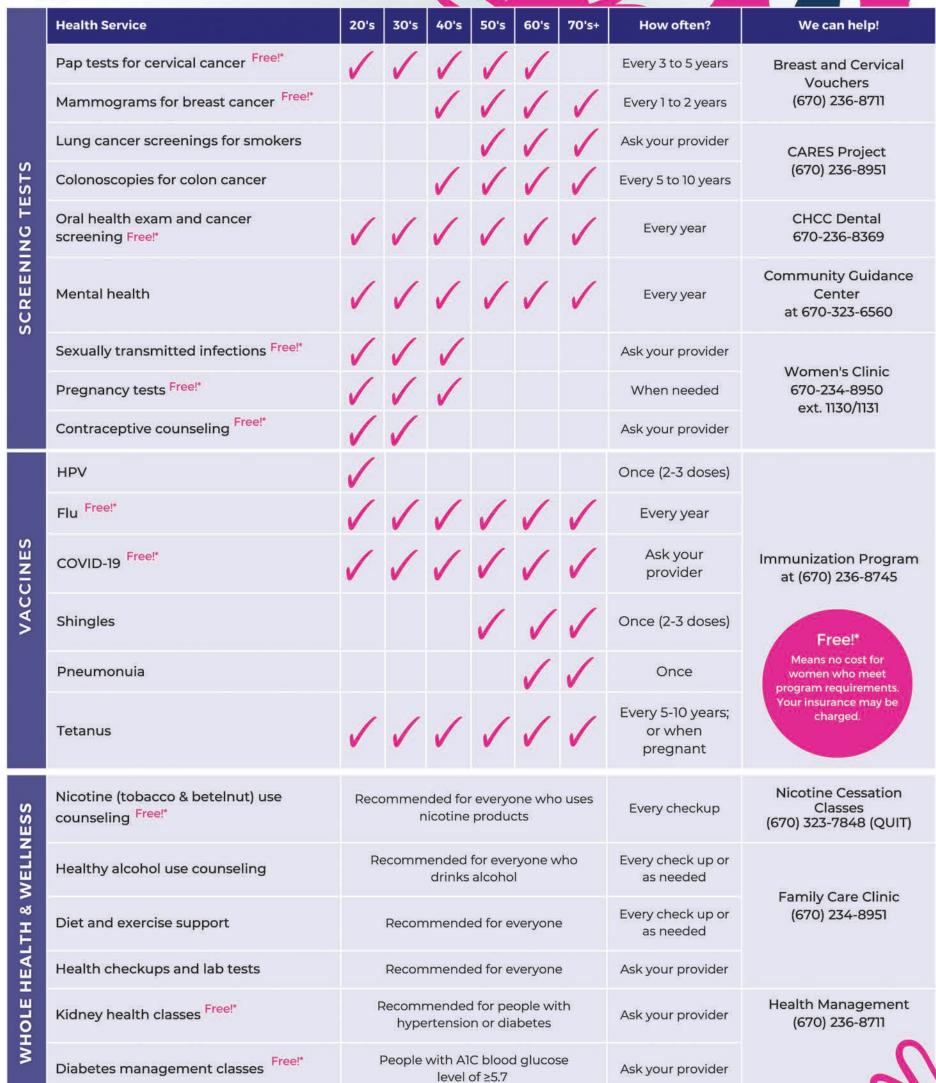
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

giving my time and talent to help each organization reach their goals. Most importantly, as a mom and a grandparent, I will continue to prioritize my children and grandchildren by providing them the love, support, and guidance they need."

In life, Aquino believes in the importance of honesty, truth, and in choosing to do good and avoid doing bad. That may sound trite but, as Margaret Chase Smith says, "The right way is not always the popular and easy way. Standing for right when it is unpopular is a true test of moral character."







For more information about women's health services call: (670) 287-7718 | Monday to Friday 8:00am - 4:00PM

Visit www.chcc.health for our mobile outreach schedule and follow our social media for updates: (f) (O) (S) @cnmichcc

Savannah Lyn Delos Santos: Beauty with a purpose

By TERI M. FLORES
CORRESPONDENT

egal yet unpretentious, with a charm that has captivated fans in Oceania and Asia and a caring heart for the vulnerable, Savannah Lyn Delos Santos is not just another pretty face: she is an advocate for protecting victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence with her work as a manager of the Sexual Assault Response Team at the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence.

Fresh from her history-making star turn as the first Northern Marianas beauty queen to land in the Top 15 of an international beauty pageant, Delos Santos believes the prestige of being a Miss International candidate has given her a bigger platform to amplify her advocacy for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

"Being a survivor motivates me to do good in this world. My mom also taught me the value of being kind and doing everything in life with love," Delos Santos said.

And it's not just her work



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Miss Northern Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santos participates in the Liberation Day Parade.

with victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence that sets her apart. Delos Santos started her volunteer work as a teen and her experiences include, among others, being a wish granter for Make-A-Wish Hawai'i as well as serving hot meals to disadvantaged children in India and homeless individuals on Skid Row in Los Angeles.

This beauty queen's story, from her childhood until she made it to the 2021 Miss International pageant, is a

journey to self-discovery and acceptance. Before her foray into the pageant world, Delos Santos was an outstanding student at Chaminade University, where she was working on her master's degree in business administration. While in university, Delos Santos juggled her various academic pursuits while doing part-time work on the side.

She first ventured into the pageant world when, at 16, she joined Miss Teen Marian-

as upon the encouragement of a classmate. "She believed in me and that meant so much. If she didn't encourage me to join, I would've never gotten involved in the pageant world," recalls Delos Santos.

After failing to win in her first pageant, Delos Santos tried her luck again in 2021 when she vied for the title of Miss Northern Marianas. At that time, she was just visiting Saipan to attend a cousin's wedding. That's when

she was again presented the opportunity to return to the pageant circuit. Although hesitant at first, the opportunity to reconnect with the island and reestablish ties with the community were enough to convince her to join. "My intention wasn't to win. I just wanted to get more involved in my community. I was away from home for almost seven years and I felt so disconnected."

After meeting with the national director of Stellar Marianas where they talked about the group's future and their action plan, Delos Santos made the decision to give herself a second chance to join. This time she won the crown and the opportunity to represent the CNIMI in the international pageant circuit.

The 25-year-old Chammorita's journey to the 60th Miss International pageant was not without its challenges. "I encountered several situations that weren't necessarily in my favor while both preparing and getting into the pageant itself. I didn't have a lot of resources for the pageant until about three weeks before I was supposed to fly out. Of course, it wasn't any one person's fault. ...I

she was again presented the opportunity to return to the pageant circuit. Although hesitant at first, the oppor-

Delos Santos acknowledges the need to be mentally prepared to overcome the pressures of any form of competition. "Mental fortitude. All I was sure of was that I was going to perform my absolute best with what I had, and I was going to walk away from this third pageant feeling proud of myself.

Delos Santos also sought the help of a personal trainer to ensure she was physically prepared for the task. "He was awesome! As much as I got a lot of negative comments about my weight, I loved how I looked on stage! I'm a Pacific Islander, and most Pacific Islanders have my same body type. It's beautiful; I'm beautiful!"

The slew of criticism Delos Santos received during the competition were wideranging and, at times, hurtful—from her physical inadequacies in height and weight and questions on why a small island nation can justifiably represent the Miss International brand. Like the queen that she is, Delos Santos took

Continued on Next Page





Miss Northern Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santo poses with her mom, Elena, at the hotel where they stayed for the 2021 Miss International pageant.

From Page 20

all the feedback with grace and forged her way into the competition.

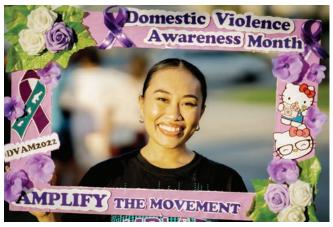
In an interview on local television, Delos Santos stood her ground and claimed her right to be one of the top picks at the 2021 Ms. International pageant. "I am so grateful for all the feedback that people are giving, but despite some people saying that I am not deserving, I definitely feel that I am deserving of being in the Top 15 and I'm never going to take that back."

Delos Santos acknowledges the love and support she received from the community as the driving force behind her determination to continue in the competition. "I would not be as happy and as positive if I wasn't representing the Northern Marianas and our people. I am very grateful to all of them. We made history!"

Recalling the moment when she was called to join the Top 15 lineup of Miss International contestants, Delos Santos said she was "a whole ball of mixed feelings—excitement, fear, shock. Initially, I thought of this little girl and her mom whom I met while I was volunteering at a domestic violence shelter in Los Angeles and how proud they would be to see me as a pageant finalist. I thought of my mom and brother, especially my mom. She loves pageants! I saw her jumping out of her seat, ecstatic, and that's what mattered most to me."

When asked how she represented the Northern Marianas, Delos Santos said, "With kindness and genuine love" and by proudly acknowledging that some of the best people she has met in life are from the Northern Marianas.

Among the major takeaways Delos Santos learned in her pageant experience is the importance of self-care by adopting a healthy mindset and developing mental fortitude, which is strength in facing adversity, putting to action this quote from Robert Kiyosaki: "Remember, your mind is your greatest asset, so be careful what you put into it." In addition, she believes that maintaining a humble and grateful spirit opens the door for more blessings.



Miss Northern Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santos is not just another pretty face: she is an advocate for protecting victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Delos Santos also stresses the importance of managing expectations, especially of oneself and of others, and being realistic with them. "By managing my expectations, I learned how to make friends and to empower my pageant sisters. I'm happy to share that I walked away feeling incredibly proud of myself after the Miss Marianas pageant. In the end, I just wanted to be proud of myself. I learned how to embrace all moments in life—both good and bad. I credit my pageant years with this unexpected but beautiful growth."

Delos Santos considers three people as her role mod-



ONTRIBUTED

Supporters greet Miss Northern Marianas Savannah Lyn Delos Santos at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport after returning from the 2021 Miss International pageant.

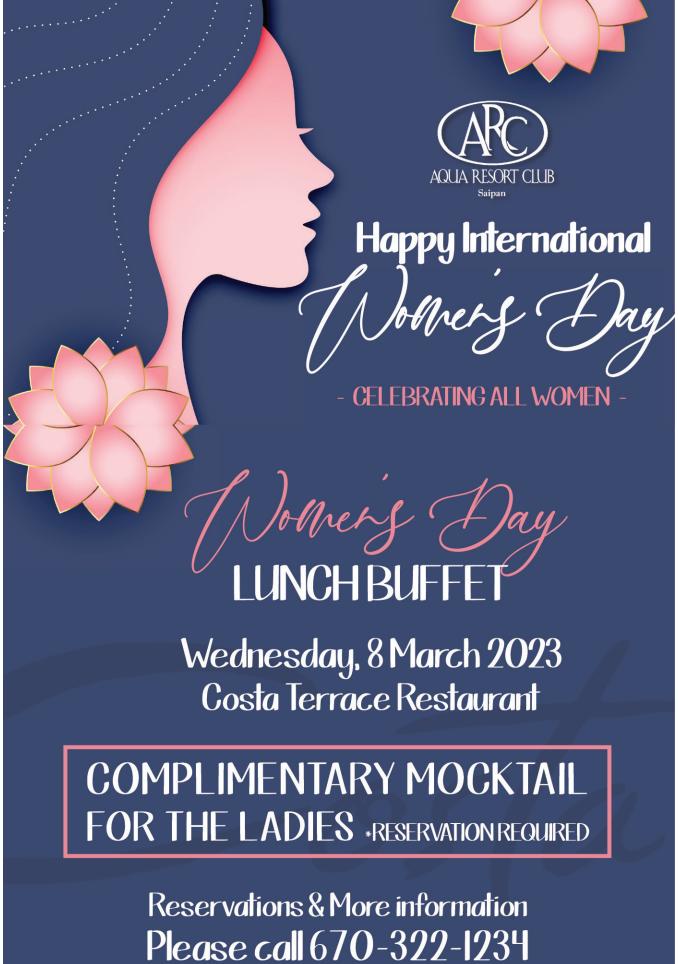
els: Her mother, Elena;, her brother, Christian, whom she refers to as a walking encyclopedia; and NMI Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual

Violence executive director Maisie B. Tenorio.

She considers each of them as influential individuals whom she admires for their strength, intelligence and compassion.

In the next five years, Delos Santos may take up further studies, but, for now, she is happy just being the reigning Ms. Northern Marianas, a title which she will be holding for two years by March 13.

To those who want to join the pageant, she has these to share: "Reflect and find your intention for joining. Winning a title should not be the goal. Prepare yourself mentally, physically and emotionally because you are representing the Northern Marianas and its people. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that requires hard work."



Gloria Cavanagh: Being a part of the CNMI community

loria Cavanagh, the vice president of Mariana E-Land and the acting chair of the board of Marianas Visitors Authority, wears many hats. She is not only a proud daughter, sister, wife, a mother, but also a good friend, mentor, and role model to many. She excels in her dual role as a powerful leader and a friendly colleague.

Cavanagh has a background in math and accounting: She majored in math and accounting in college and her first job was as a math teacher. She is a firm believer in knowing number and financial figures. Working in the hospitality industry, she advanced her skillsets to cut costs, maximize revenues, and optimize the financial structure of the business. While climbing the corporate

When I first started my career, it was a different time. As a woman, I had to prove myself harder, work harder, balance harder, and improve my capacity harder. There is no one secret ingredient to the recipe of success in a woman's career. Luckily, I have loved what I was doing.'

ladder, she learned how to manage and oversee people, money, and the entire organization.

"When I first started my career, it was a different time. As a woman, I had to prove myself harder, work harder, balance harder, and improve my capacity harder. There is no one secret ingredient to the recipe of success in a woman's career. Luckily, I have loved what I was doing," she says.

"When people are in a certain field or industry long enough, they believe they know it all. I try my best not to fall into that trap. My tip for younger women in the business is never to stop learning. There are always new trends, new information, and new knowledge in the world, and

that is particularly more so in the hospitality industry. That is what still excites me every morning," she adds.

Her coworkers admire her in many ways, but especially for her dedication to the community. Her team sees her as the glue of the team, and the center of communication. She has been actively serving the CNMI community more



than a decade now. She willingly took various roles at the Hotel Association of Northern Marianas Islands, the MVA board, and other committees and associations in the hopes to contribute to sustainable development of the CNMI's

tourism industry. "Always remember that you are a part of the community. If your community is not healthy, it will affect your life and your family's. Take a part and be a part," she says, which is something that she lives up to. (PR)

KENSINGTON

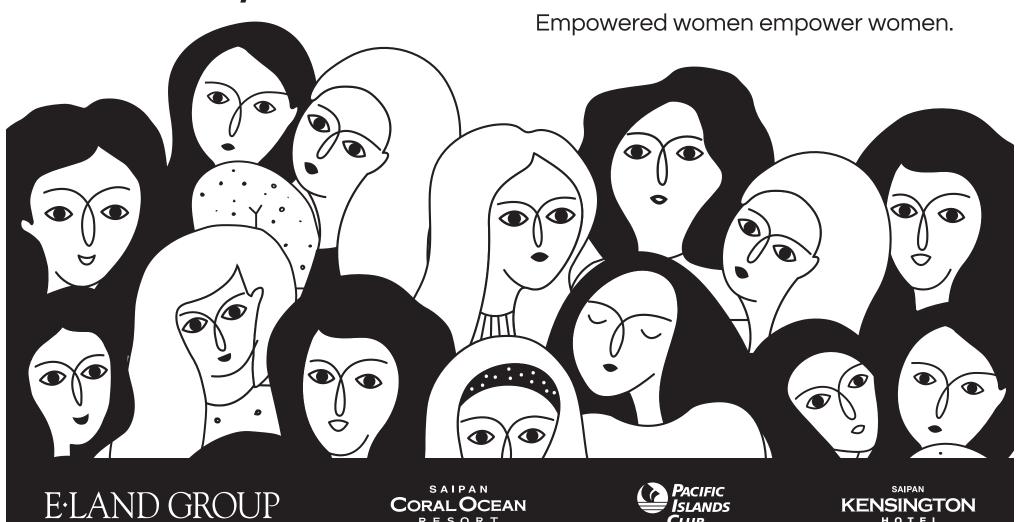
HOTEL

Islands

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Happy International Women's Day of 2023

BIBA, GREAT WOMEN OF CNM!!



CORAL OCEAN

RESORT

Arley Gutierrez Long: Tinian's Florence Nightingale

By TERI M. FLORES CORRESPONDENT

desire to he guarantee the health and wellbeing of anyone and everyone is what drives Arley Gutierrez Long to care, to love, to serve.

A nurse practitioner by profession, Long is the sole provider at the Tinian Isla Community Health Center, serving a community of 2,044 men, women and children. Added to the list is her role as a mentor to women and the youth is her extended role as friend and mother, an advocate of women's rights and youth sports, and one of the driving forces behind Tinian's food bank, the Ohala Foundation. Daunting? Not for this Latina who has made Tinian her home in the past 27 years.

Long is tireless in her pursuit of making sure that those around her are enjoying the quality of life they deserve. "What makes me happy? For me it's always been about giving, listening, standing up for those who didn't know how. ...Those who were discriminated...who felt alone... the helpless. ...I want to see them flourish, recognize their self-worth, and provide them an equitable opportunity."

Loyal by nature, Long believes in the principle of building relationships and the altruistic pursuit of engaging and giving back to the community. "Through these relationships, you learn to remain humble and stand up for injustice, discrimination and disempowerment. Keep your faith in God and familia is everything. Lastly, giving up is not an option. If there's no way, find one."

Long's affinity for the Tinian community began in 1997 when she became a nurse practitioner at Tinian Public Health. On her first day at work, she and two other nurses had to take drastic measures to prevent the outbreak of tuberculosis in the community. "I took it upon myself to initiate an urgent response. I was determined to do my best with only three of us in Public Health with limited supplies, scarce safety gear, and a rundown car that held the door shut with tie wire and no air conditioning. That was my introduction to N95 masks and the start of a TB program on Tinian."

As a family and women's healthcare nurse practitioner on Tinian, Long has seen people in their most vulnerable state—those suffering from obesity, diabetes, and heart disease—which are the top three highest rates of comorbidities in patients. Then there was the spike in the number of teen pregnancies in 2000 that Public Health was able to address, thanks to the program "Baby, think it over," which Long herself researched and implemented.

Armed with an innovative approach to the delivery of quality healthcare, Long was instrumental in the passage of local legislation that gives Advance Practice Registered Nurses the authority to practice with full independent authority and without supervision by a licensed physician. A health crisis was averted, thanks to Long who was then the vice chair of the CNMI Board of Nursing. Together with the CNMI Nursing Board and other nurses and physicians, Long tirelessly lobbied and help educate local stakeholders to get the bill passed.

As a result of this bold move, the CNMI today is ahead of Guam and Hawaii in implementing this measure. To date, there are now 26 states, Washington, D.C., and two U.S. territories that have full independent practice authority, and counting.

Her support for youth sports also stems from her nursing practice. A firm believer in prevention, Long, together with her brood of four, actively participated in the Tinian Premier Football Club. Together with the other women volunteers in the community, the soccer program ran for eight years, with Long promoting it as a way to counter chronic health issues, mainly obesity, among

And now, Long and her family have established the Ohala Foundation, which is a Tinian-based food bank that services 1,000 families on island and on neighboring Rota. With her husband, three children and some community and youth volunteers, the group banded together to respond to the community's urgent need for food supplies in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Yutu.

"[Super] Typhoon Yutu exposed the vulnerability of our islands. During its aftermath, no one was providing food for Tinian and that is when we decided to set up the food bank. We depended on military and Red Cross assistance. When they left, we were still in the process of rebuilding and most people still did not have jobs nor any source of income, so the community was really left wanting." said Long.

Officially registered as a nonprofit organization in 2020, Ohala is overseen by a board of directors chaired by Long's husband, Philip Mendiola Long, while her two daughters serve as covice chair. Her son is the board secretary while Long herself serves as the board's treasurer.

Regular food distribution takes place every two weeks on Tinian and beginning in April, monthly in Rota. Ohala gives out more than 150 bags that have seven-days' worth of food, a recipe, and a meal program that makes different recipes with the food provided.

Anyone in need of food assistance can seek help at the Ohala Foundation. Long said the foundation intentionally did not place a financial requirement so that more families can quality for the program. "Avoiding qualifications allows us to catch families that are in need who otherwise have no way to buy groceries."

This policy has left Ohala open to the criticism that some people may be taking advantage of their generosity. Long acknowledges that there may be truth behind the comments, but they are not one to judge. "We never turn people away."

In order to sustain the program, Ohala constantly seeks help from the community and the foundation is grateful for the generosity of its supporters—be they private individuals or companies but the need is great and it needs to be filled.

"We need more help! We are extremely grateful to our donors who are generous and realize the true need. The donations need to be consistent. Most donations are once a year or twice a year. We need to increase our cash flow bi-weekly," Long said.

To help, donors are encouraged to donate \$5 or \$10 a month via PayPal through Ohala's website at https:// www.ohalafoundation. org/donate

"Creating Ohala was a very humbling experience for me and my family. We are truly blessed and we have taught our children to give back. It



This family portrait shows Arley Gutierrez Long posing with her husband, Philip, their identical twins Isa Haa'ni and Cielo Citllali, and their son Tasi Thomas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

is an overwhelming feeling to give back and contribute to your community and to society. We enjoy what we do and volunteering gives us a sense of purpose," said Long. She said the inspiration behind the foundation are her three children, whom the Longs have raised with compassionate hearts and the spirit of altruism.

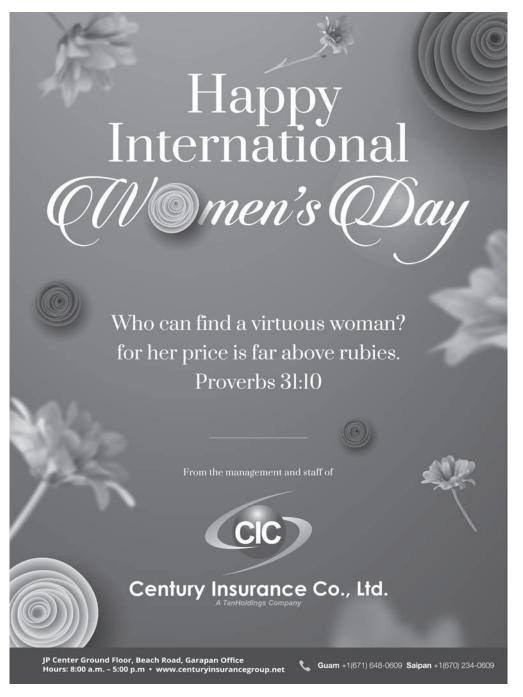
For this Watsonville, California native, her career in the healthcare field and her volunteer work has brought her personal rewards that she is proud to share. "I've learned

the importance of choice and mutual respect... developed skills and abilities which encourage equal opportunities...blessed to take part in society. I lead a humble life, advocating for many causes. ...It's the only way to highlight yours and others' perspectives to the wider community and act as a catalyst for change. If I ignored my ability to advocate, I'd be missing out on critical support for many important issues."

Long credits her family who has supported her in her journey. Together with her

husband, Philip, a prominent Tinian businessman, they have raised identical twins Isa Haa'ni and Cielo Citllali, both of whom are freshman Harvard University students and Tasi Thomas, who is currently a sophomore student at Stanford University.

Just like the founder of modern nursing, the heroine Florence Nightingale, Arley Gutierrez Long used her knowledge, her determination and her compassion for change and reform to make her community a much better place to live in.



Edrianne Dianna Flores:

Serving her country, remembering her roots

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

oday, as we remember all women of the world for their achievements as well as their continuing efforts to achieve parity and equality, U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Edrianne Dianna Kahiau F. Flores has more than one reason to celebrate.

As a month dedicated for women throughout history, Flores herself is making history as the first woman of Asian American Pacific Islander heritage to receive a dual promotion as the interim 5J MAJCOM functional manager and the Command Law Office Manager for Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Quite a feat indeed for this diminutive firebrand who commands respect from her superiors and colleagues but, most importantly, the love of her friends and family. It was a momentous occasion not just for her, but for



SMSgt. Edrianne Dianna Kahiau F. Floreshas her picture taken with her family.

women and people of color throughout the military.

"I am honored to be given the privilege to be of service to our country. This new assignment has its challenges, but I know, with the help of our legal team and support of my friends and family, I can be successful," Flores said.

Aside from becoming a lawyer, joining the U.S. Air Force had always been a part

of Flores' plan since her teens. To prepare herself for the armed forces, Flores actively participated in Marianas High School's JROTC program, where she was one of its officers. Influenced by her JROTC mentors, Flores signed up for the U.S. Air Force and entered active duty on May 21, 2007.

In her 16 years of service, Flores has won numerous accolades recognizing her work, her leadership and her volunteer activities. Some of the awards she has received are the Meritorious Service Medal, which is a military award presented to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who distinguished themselves by outstanding meritorious achievement or service to the United States; the National Defense Service Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; 2022 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy 22-E Flight Leader award by CMSAF#19 JoAnne Bass; and the 2022 Office of the Staff Judge Advocate and Senior Enlisted Leader Top Performer award for March), to name a few in her long list of achievements.

But for Flores, the awards and recognition are but mere icing on the cake. What is more important to her is she is able to forge friendships and build relationships and create understanding for the betterment and welfare of society.

Throughout her long career, Flores faced challenges



U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Edrianne Dianna Kahiau F. Flores is making history as the first woman of Asian American Pacific Islander heritage to receive a dual promotion as the interim 5J MAJCOM functional manager and the Command Law Office Manager for Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

but remained steadfast and committed to her mission and her fellow service members as she led by example. "The Air Force is generally accepting of my leadership style and especially being a woman in the military. Adversity has been a part of my journey in a male-driven profession; however, because I have been blessed to be surrounded and mentored by amazing mentors and leaders who are phenomenal human beings and subject matter experts in our legal expertise in military law, I have been able to challenge the status quo, pursue rare and impactful opportunities, and hone my skills to be excellent in my craft. As I focused on being the best in my job, this leveled the playing field when it came to advocating for change, remaining resilient, and helping more people in the process," she said.

Through her hard work and dedication, she rose through the ranks and climbed to master sergeant 1 on May 1, 2019, until she was promoted to her current position—which is the most difficult enlisted promotion to attain in the Air Force.

As a senior master sergeant, Flores is responsible for overseeing the training and development of the next generation of Air Force leaders. She works to ensure that her team is equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their missions.

In addition, she is humbled to be in the Air Force's Judge Advocate General's Corps. Flores serves as the senior enlisted advisor to the PACAF Staff Judge Advocate and senior leaders, while also directly leading a 16-person staff of experts from the JAGC's three mission domains of military justice, civil law, and operations and international law.

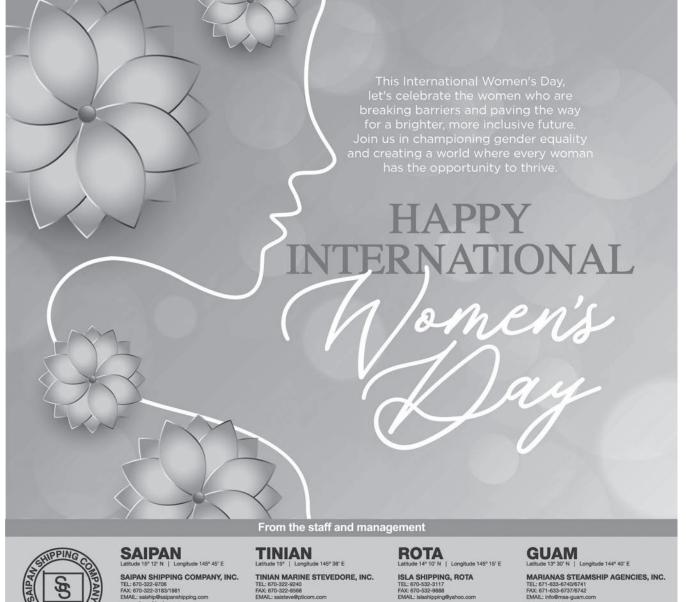
Additionally, Flores aids in supervising the activities of more than 260 legal personnel in 15 legal offices supporting PACAF commanders and more than 100,000 PACAF airmen and dependents.

Flores started as an airman assigned to the security forces. She was approved to cross-train into the paralegal career field in September 2010 and completed the Paralegal Apprentice course at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, in April 2011. At the moment, Flores is pursuing her law degree at the University of Hawaii in Manoa.

With all her accomplishments and accolades, Flores also makes time for competitive Polynesia dancing to keep her grounded and close to her roots as an island girl. "Ultimately, I love serving my diverse team and especially taking care of my No. 1 priority, my family, while also staying true to my roots as an island girl through competitive Polynesia dancing." Given free time that has now become a luxury, considering her duties and tight schedules, Flores dotes on her 14-year-old terrier, Stitch, and her nieces, Kara Monroe, 3; Tula Linla'a, 5 months, and her 1-year-old nephew, Molokai.

For Flores, all her successes are just icing on the cake, rewards given for a job well done. But what is important is that she is able to take care of her family's needs. As she continues to climb the ladder of success, Flores is grateful and thankful for the support

Continued on Next Page



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Join the 'celebration wave' for International Women's Day



As per tradition, several women gather for the Women's Month Day of Prayer at the Kristo Rai Church in Garapan last Sunday and as a community service, donated nonperishable goods and toiletries to help replenish the Karidat Social Services pantry. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By CHRYSTAL MARINO CORRESPONDENT

s the world marks International Women's Day today and the CNMI celebrates Women's History Month, members of the CNMI's Office of the Governor's Women's Affairs Office and the CNMI's Women's Association will be gathered at the Garapan Fishing Base in Kristo Rai tonight at 5pm and are inviting all women and supporters to join them to show support of CNMI women by waving and sharing their messages in banners and posters.

Tonight's event, called a "celebration wave" for International Women's Day, is just one of the many activities the CNMI's Office of the Governor's Women's Affairs Office and the

CNMI's Women's Association have lined up for the month.

Women's Affairs Office special adviser Shirley Camacho-Ogumoro, and CWA's project director Valentina Rivera shared that not only will the month be full of community events celebrating women, but on March 31, 2023 the organizations are collaborating to bring this year's edition of the Women's Summit. More details on the summit are to be announced as the date nears.

these programs.

Last Sunday, March 5, 2023, they had the Women's Month Day of Prayer at the Kristo Rai Church in Garapan. At the 9:30am Mass at the Kristo Rai parish, many women gathered and, as per tradition, donated canned goods, non-perishable items, and toiletries to the Karidat Social Services' pantry as part of their community con-

Flores' promotion and achievements are a testament to her hard work and dedication to the Air Force, as well as her commitment to breaking barriers and achieving her goals. She is proud to be a trailblazer for Asian American Pacific Islanders in the military and it is her hope that through her example, there will be others who will be inspired to follow in her footsteps.



Women of the Saipan's Rotary Club and club president Wendell Posadas pose with CNMI's Women's Association's project director Valentina Rivera, after Rivera's presentation yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

3, they are seeking to reopen tributions this month. She that as soon they have more also mentioned that there women involved, and they are also trying to get several are several organizations on island that are holding businesses to join in sponprograms in celebration of soring the event and making way for more avenues of Women's History Month, and she encouraged the public's support for women entrepresupport and involvement in neurs in the CNMI. Rivera also mentioned the ongoing en-Rivera, who was the guest trepreneurs vendors spot at their location on Capital Hill, speaker at the Saipan's Rotary Club's luncheon at Hyatt Rewhich happens every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturgency Saipan yesterday, further advocated and shared day, from 9am until 2pm, (dethe CWA's mission in helping pending on the vendors) and empower and support aspirwill offer a market of goods ing businesswomen in the from women entrepreneurs. CNMI. Rivera said that, after There will also be an indoor a pause in the Women's Enconsignment market that will also feature the work of trepreneurs Project Cohort

women entrepreneurs. Supporters and interested individuals are welcome to check out the event.

In her message to women in the CNMI this month, Ogumoro said, "Be yourself, your beauty is not just outside but also from within, and continue to inspire women around you and be that role model women empowering women." Ogumoro also encouraged women to participate and take advantage of all the free programs and events held to celebrate women.

"We want to support every one of us out there that has a dream to be an entrepreneur or wants to have their own

lives for themselves. ...Just like Miley Cyrus says, 'We can buy our own flowers,' and we can support ourselves and we can push ourselves; and the most important thing is initiative. Everyone else can hype you and push you to do things, but really it's your destiny, it's your journey, and you have to do that yourself. So I would push people to do it, and today, this year 2023, do it," said Rivera.

To follow these organizations, and to keep updated on ongoing events you can follow them @CNMI Women's Affairs Office and @CNMI Women's Association on Facebook.

From Page 24

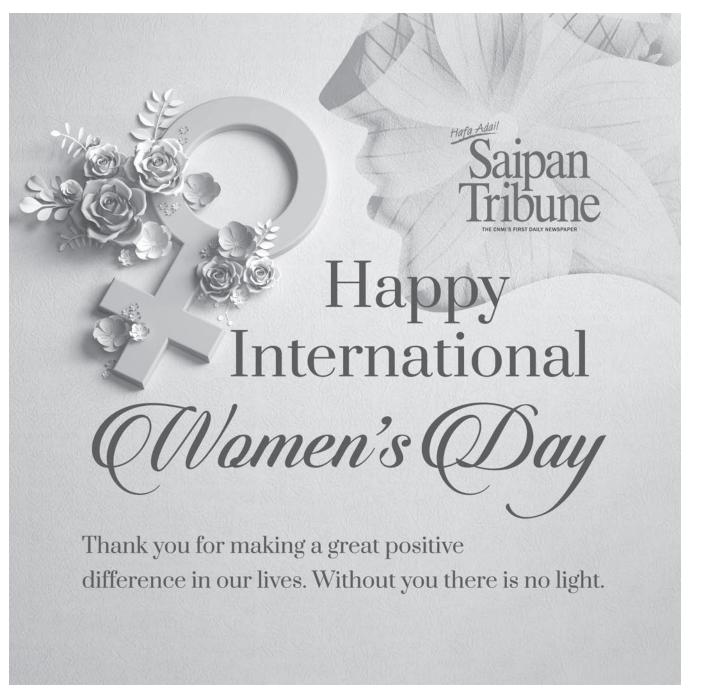
she has received through the years from everyone who saw her through. "I will always be thankful for those whom I have crossed paths with. Whether they are my family, friends, and fellow service members, all of them contributed to my growth."

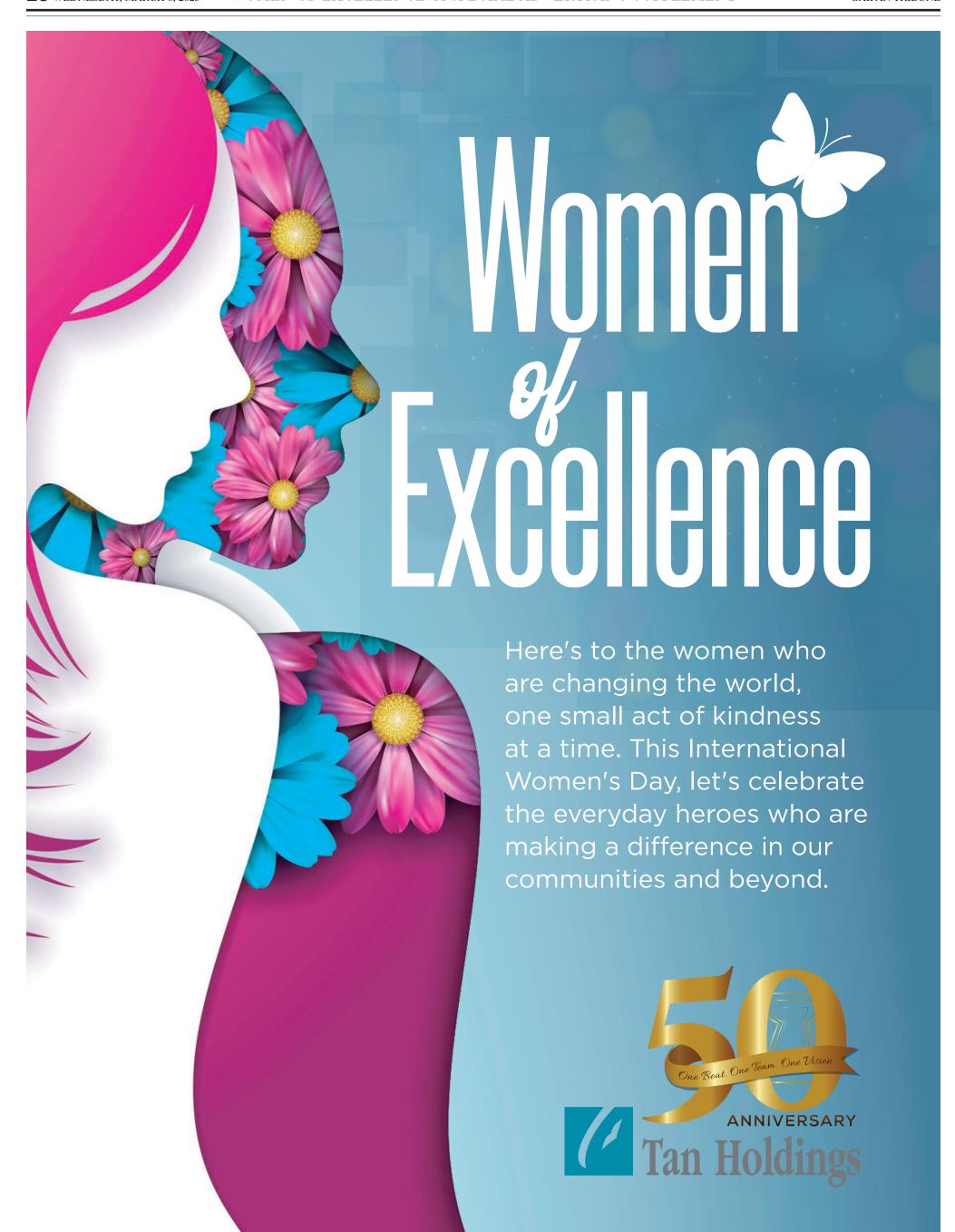
Flores said she will always go back to her roots and will always be proud of her heritage. She was raised on the tropical islands of Saipan, Guam, and now calls Hawaii home. "I will never forget my roots and my humble beginnings as raised by an amazing single mother on beautiful Saipan!"

Hores grew up in Garapan and Marpi and attended the Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Middle High School and Marianas High School before moving to Guam. Her two other siblings also followed her lead and joined the Air Force as well. Her brother, Kevin Flores, is a senior airman stationed in Fort Stewart, Georgia, while her sister, Beatrix Bainter, is a staff sergeant assigned to the Joint Base Charleston in South

Flores says she joined the

Air Force because she was inspired by her mother. "My mother inspired me to be a contributing member of society and the Air Force was the greatest opportunity that was presented to me. After I joined in 2007 and as I continue my 15-year tenure, my adopted father and retired senior master sergeant, the late Noberto A. Salas, and my adopted mother, the late Lolita Salas, kept me inspired throughout my career because of their passion and commitment to servant leadership in their own families and in the community. Finally, my brother, Kevin...and my sister...Beatrix...are my daily inspirations to preserve a legacy of servant leadership for our nation."





SAIPAN TRIBUNE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023 **27**

Business

United names Oscar the Grouch as 1st Chief Trash Officer

CHICAGO—United Airlines named Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch as its first Chief Trash Officer as he and the airline celebrate his love of rubbish. United Airlines' new, consumer education campaign is designed to promote the expected benefit of using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) more broadly.

The new campaign—which features Oscar in more than 30 pieces of original video, digital, social and out-of-home content—follows the iconic character's journey from job listing to c-suite office starring alongside real United employees.

SAF is an alternative to conventional jet fuel that, on a lifecycle basis, reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with air travel compared to conventional jet fuel alone. SAF is being made from used cooking oil and agricultural waste, and, in the future, could be made from other feedstocks including household trash or forest waste.

To date, United has invested in the future production of over three billion gallons of SAF—the most of any airline in the world.

Consumers can take action too-in a first among U.S. airlines, United now shows an estimate of each flight's carbon footprint on a per economy seat passenger basis on its app and website, and travelers have the option to contribute to supplement United's investment in the UAV Sustainable Flight Fund, a first-of-its-kind investment vehicle designed to support startups focused on decarbonizing air travel by accelerating the research, production and technologies associated with SAF.

"United has invested in more sustainable aviation fuel production than any airline in the world, by far," said United chief communications officer Josh Earnest. "Every airline burns jet fuel to run their business, but no airline will solve climate change on its own. So United has enlisted Oscar to help us educate the traveling public of all ages about SAF and rally them to the cause of fighting climate change. From banana peels to fryer grease, Oscar is uniquely qualified to help us explain why trash could be the treasure that fuels the jets of the future."

Starting today, people can follow Oscar's journey as he stars in videos alongside real United employees. The integrated campaign includes interactive social-first elements, colorful spreads in Hemispheres® magazine and a unique film series, all of which were created to simplify a complicated topic in an approachable and entertaining way. Creative highlights include:

- Film Series: Across multiple videos, United highlights Oscar's work in his new role, such as a "BINtro" film show-casing his first day on the job. The film is part of a series that focuses on the importance of SAF. In an additional 90-second film, United Captain Tomica Adams breaks down how things like waste can help fuel air travel.
- Out of Home: United's customers out-of-home content introduces the airline's new hire in a larger-than-life format. The playful imagery features Oscar in aviation settings—from tarmac to onboard. The photos will pique customers munities v to come in For more united.com and down onboard. The photos will pique customers

people's interest about how trash could one day help us fly toward a lower carbon future.

■ Digital/Social: Providing surround sound to the campaign, storytelling continues on social channels with bite-size edutainment videos, engaging Instagram Story features, emojifilled Twitter threads and more to raise awareness of the SAF nitty-gritty. The social campaign will live on owned and paid social and digital channels.

As a part of the collaboration, United Airlines is supporting Sesame Workshop through a donation to the nonprofit educational organization's Welcome Sesame initiative. Sesame Workshop will also be included in United Airlines' Miles on a Mission, where travelers will be able to donate miles to help support its global mission to help children grow smarter stronger and kinder.

"This campaign provided a special opportunity to show-case an iconic Sesame Street character, Oscar the Grouch, celebrating what he loves best – trash," said Jennifer Ahearn, VP, Global Strategic Partnerships & Themed Entertainment, Sesame Workshop. "The amazing collaboration helps United Airlines explain in simpler terms the technology of turning trash into fuel in a fun and engaging manner."

United will continue to bring this relationship to life for our customers and for the communities we serve, with more to come in the months ahead. For more information, visit united.com/ChiefTrashOfficer and download media assets





DEATH AND FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

It is with deepest sorrow that we announce the unexpected passing of our beloved

+Bradley T. Mgewakl

on February 25, 2023.

Funeral services will be held
on Saturday, March 11, 2023. His remains will
be at the Saipan Palau Evangelical Church
in Navy Hill for viewing at 8:00 am.
Prayer and memorial service will start
at 11:00 am followed by interment service
at Tanapag Cemetery where he will be
at peaceful rest.

Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

The Ngewakl and Sablan Families

Tsubaki Tower celebrates Mes CHamoru this March

TUMON, Guam—The Tsubaki Tower invites Guam's residents and visitors to enjoy Mes CHamoru (Chamorro Month) in Tumon through the resort's culinary and cultural experiences planned throughout the month.

"Our goal this month is to share some of the best of Guam's culture with our international guests, visiting military personnel, and our resident guests," said Joel Davis, assistant general manager at The Tsubaki Tower. "We are celebrating the culture and history of Guam by creating memorable experiences through cultural performances, crafts, art, and food."

In-house guests can enjoy cultural activities planned during their stay: music lessons (Mondays and Thursdays at 4:30pm) and cultural activities such as weaving and coconut activities (Sundays and Fridays at 3pm).

The community is invited to join Tsubaki guests for the sunset cultural music and dance performances by Inetnon Gefpa'go every Tuesday at 5:30pm and Saturday at 6pm at the Garden Pavilion, Tsubaki's outdoor stage Before the performance, Inetnon Gefpa'go will greet guests as they arrive at the hotel's main entrance and welcome them to the performance overlooking the garden and ocean.

Pop-up fairs planned

To promote local arts and crafts made by small business owners, The Tsubaki Tower is hosting two pop-up fairs from 3pm to 5pm on March 12 and March 26 in the Tasi Terrace. Everyone is welcome to attend to support the island's artists and makers. Please note that the outdoor performances and events may be subject to change due to the weather.

Chamorro fusion menu and cocktails

Through the end of March, Casa Oceano, the resort's all-day dining restaurant will pay tribute to the island's unique culinary flavors through its Chamorro Fusion dinner menu.

Beginning March 5, The resort's two bars—Nunu Bar and Gadao Bar—will present Tsubaki's Legendary Cocktails that honor the island's history and storytelling. Be sure to ask for two of the most popular cocktails by name, Chief Gadao and Taotao Mo'na, to name a few.

"Our Chamorro Fusion food and beverage program was very popular with our guests last Chamorro Month. We've been looking forward to expanding our celebration through an enhanced offering of local dishes and inspired cocktails," Davis added.

PHR member benefits are welcome at all food and beverage outlets. (*PR*)

28 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Nation

Plunge in border crossings could blunt GOP attack on Biden

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A sharp drop in illegal border crossings since December could blunt a Republican point of attack against President Joe Biden as the Democratic leader moves to reshape a broken asylum system that has dogged him and his predecessors.

A new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows some support for changing the number of immigrants and asylum-seekers allowed into the country. About 4 in 10 U.S. adults say the level of immigration and asylum-seekers should be lowered, while about 2 in 10 say they should be higher, according to the poll. About a third want the numbers to remain the same.

The decrease in border crossings followed Biden's announcement in early January that Mexico would take back Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans under a pandemic-era rule that denies migrants the right to seek asylum as part of an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, the U.S. agreed to admit up to 30,000 a month of those four nationalities on humanitarian parole if they apply online,



enter at an airport and find a financial sponsor.

The administration has also proposed generally denying asylum to anyone who travels though another country on their way to the U.S. without seeking protection there— effectively all non-Mexicans who appear at the U.S. southern border.

The new rules put forth by Biden could help the president fight back against critics who complain he hasn't done enough to address border security issues. But the moves have also fueled anger among some of his Democratic allies who are concerned that he is furthering a Trump-era policy they view as anti-immigrant and hurting vulnerable migrants who are trying to escape dangerous conditions in their native countries.

And the new changes—and subsequent drop in illegal border crossings-are unlikely to stop the barrage of attacks from conservatives who see border security as a powerful political weapon.

Biden has been on the defensive as Republicans and right-wing media outlets have hammered him over the soaring increase in migrant encounters at the border. The new House GOP leadership has held hearings on what they call the "Biden border crisis" and talked of impeaching Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Agents detained migrants more than 2.5 million times at the southern border in 2022,

Murdaugh testimony only confirmed his guilt, jurors say nels, saying he was paranoid his testimony believable. through that," juror James Mcthrough that," juror James Mc-

> Prosecutors decided not to seek the death penalty, and the judge handed down the harshest possible sentence he could -consecutive life sentences

including more than 250,000 in December, the highest on record. According to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, Border Patrol agents stopped migrants about 130,000 times in February, similar to January.

Among Republicans, the poll shows about two-thirds say there should be fewer immigrants and asylum-seekers, while only about 1 in 10 say there should be more.

Democrats are split: About a quarter say the number of immigrants should increase, a quarter say it should decrease, and about 4 in 10 say it should remain the same. They are slightly more supportive of asylum-seekers specifically, with 37% supporting an increase, 26% backing a decrease, and 36% saying the number should remain the same.

Under U.S. law, numbers are not capped on asylum, which was largely a policy afterthought until about a decade ago. Since 2017, the U.S. has been the world's most popular destination for asylum-seekers, according to U.N. figures. Even those who lose in court can stay for years while their cases wind through a backlogged system.

Omar Reffell, a 38-year-old independent voter in Houston, said that he supports immigration but that news coverage of "caravans of people trying to cross the border" sends the wrong message to migrants.

"People think that they just

show up at the border, come across, there is not going to be any repercussions," Reffell said. "I'm not against immigration. I think immigration is good for the country, but it has to happen in a very orderly manner or it puts a lot of stress, especially on the border states being able to provide resources.'

More than 100,000 migrants each month were being released in U.S. border cities late last year with notices to appear in immigration court or report to immigration authorities.

Dan Restrepo, a top White House adviser on Latin America during Barack Obama's presidency, believes the American public will accept high levels of immigration—if a systematic process can be followed.

The challenge in managing migration "is the sense of chaos and disorder that can be created by images of overwhelmed processing facilities and the like at the physical border," he said. "It's less the numbers and more the imagery" that bothers voters.

Republicans cast Biden's expansion of humanitarian parole for four nationalities as a political ploy to divert attention from the border and are not likely to let up on their criticism of the president on immigration. The Federation of American Immigration Reform, an anti-immigration group, called January's plunge in border numbers "a shell game" to boost Biden's reelection prospects.

protester was killed in Janu-

JEFFREY COLLINS

Alex Murdaugh didn't help his defense when he took the stand at his trial for the murder of his wife and son, three jurors said on Monday.

Murdaugh's testimony only managed to cement what they were already thinking—that he easily lied and could turn on and off his tears at will, the jurors said on the NBC Today show.

The key piece of evidence in finding the lawyer guilty, they said, was a video on his son's cellphone that was shot minutes before the killings at the same kennels near where the bodies were found at their sprawling estate in rural South Carolina.

Murdaugh's voice can be heard on the video even though he insisted for 20 months that he hadn't been at the kennels that night. Investigators didn't see the video for more than a year before advances in hacking enabled them to unlock Paul Murdaugh's iPhone. They shared it with the defense ahead of the trial.

When he took the stand, the first thing Murdaugh did was admit he had lied to investigators about being at the kennels, saying he was paranoid of law enforcement because he was addicted to opioids and had pills in his pocket the night of the killings.

"The kennel video, that just kind of sealed the deal," juror Gwen Generette said.

The jury deliberated for less than three hours Thursday before finding Murdaugh guilty of killing his 22-yearold son, Paul, with two shotgun blasts and his 52-yearold wife, Maggie, with four or five rifle shots.

The now-disbarred lawyer maintained his innocence when he was sentenced Friday to spend the rest of his life in prison for the murders.

Murdaugh was convicted in the same court circuit where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather tried cases as the elected prosecutor for more than 80 years. Murdaugh's family founded the area's most powerful law firm a century ago. For decades, that meant that practically anyone who ended up in court on either side of the law in Colleton or Hampton counties would have a Murdaugh watching their back or staring them down.

His background was part of the reason jurors didn't find

"We already know that he's a lawyer. He's able to be emotional with cases. He's able to be emotional with himself. He knows ... when to turn it on and off. So I think that we were able to read right Dowell said.

without parole.

ACROSS THE NATION

Hawaii cites man for harassing humpback whale, dolphins

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii officials on Monday cited a Maui man seen on video snorkeling for allegedly harassing a humpback whale and pod of dolphins. The man actively pursued the adolescent whale inside Kealakekua Bay State Historical Park off the Big Island, according to a Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources statement. The agency said it received numerous calls from people reporting the harassment, as well as a video taken from the man's public Facebook page. That video appears to show him snorkeling close enough to a humpback whale to almost touch the animal's fin. A law enforcement officer from the agency went to the park on Monday and recorded video of the

man pursuing a pod of spinner dolphins. The officer said the man was leading a group chasing the dolphins.

Man accused of trying to open jet's door, attacking crew

BOSTON (AP)—A Massachusetts man tried to open an airliner's emergency door on a cross-country flight from Los Angeles to Boston and then tried to stab a flight attendant in the neck with a broken metal spoon, federal prosecutors alleged Monday. Francisco Severo Torres, 33, of Leominster, was tackled and restrained with the aid of passengers and arrested Sunday at Boston Logan International Airport when United Airlines Flight 2609 landed, the U.S. attorney's office in Boston said in a statement. He was charged with interference and attempted interference

with flight crew members and attendants using a dangerous weapon, the statement added. The man was detained at an initial appearance in federal court on Monday and awaits a hearing scheduled for Thursday. An email seeking comment was left with his federal public defender. The plane was about 45 minutes from arrival in Boston when the crew received an alarm that a side door on the aircraft was disarmed, prosecutors said.

23 charged with terrorism in Atlanta 'Cop City' protest

ATLANTA (AP)—More than 20 people from around the country faced domestic terrorism charges Monday after dozens in black masks attacked the site of a police training center under construction in a wooded area outside Atlanta where one

ary. The site has become the flashpoint of ongoing conflict between authorities and leftleaning protesters who have been drawn together, joining forces to protest a variety of causes. Among them: People against the militarization of police; others who aim to protect the environment; and some who oppose corporations who they see as helping to fund the project through donations to a police foundation. Flaming bottles and rocks were thrown at officers during a protest Sunday at "Cop City," where 26-yearold environmental activist Manuel Esteban Paez Terán. or "Tortuguita," was shot to death by officers during a raid at a protest camp in January. Police have said that Tortuguita attacked them, a version that other activists have questioned.

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Asia

US: China propaganda efforts becoming more like Russia's

China has long been seen by the U.S. as a prolific source of anti-American propaganda but less aggressive in its influence operations than Russia, which has used cyberattacks and covert operations to disrupt U.S. elections and denigrate rivals.

But many in Washington now think China is increasingly adopting tactics associated with Russia—and there's growing concern the U.S. isn't doing enough to respond.

U.S. officials and outside experts cite recent examples of China-linked actors generating false news reports with artificial intelligence and posting large volumes of denigrating social media posts. While many of the discovered efforts are amateurish, experts think they signal an apparent willingness from Beijing to try more influence campaigns as part of a broader embrace of covert operations, according to two people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence.

"To us, the attempt is what stands out," one U.S. intelligence official said.

An increasingly pessimistic mood in Washington about Beijing's expansive political and economic goals and the possibility of war over Taiwan is driving calls for the U.S. to make a stronger effort to counter Chinese influence abroad.

Lawmakers and officials

ASIAN BRIEFS

Kim's sister warns N.

are particularly concerned about countries that comprise the "Global South" in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where both the U.S. and China have huge economic and political interests. Many of those countries have populations that support both sides—what an official called "swing states" in the narrative battle.

"This should be a whole of government effort," said Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois, who is the top Democrat on a newly formed House committee focusing on the Chinese Communist Party.

"The CCP is going around the world bad-mouthing the U.S., bad-mouthing our institutions, bad-mouthing our form of government," Krishnamoorthi said in an interview. "We have to counter this because ultimately it's not in the best interests of the United States."

China's embassy in Washington said in a statement that Beijing "opposes the fabrication and dissemination of false information" and blamed the U.S. in turn for making social media "into its tool to manipulate international public opinion and its weapon to stigmatize and demonize other countries."

"On this issue, it is for the U.S. side to reflect on itself and stop shouting 'catch a thief," said embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu.

Chinese state media and af-

filiated channels, as well as social media influencers with vast followings, routinely spread ideas the U.S. labels exaggerated, false or misleading. In recent weeks, China's foreign ministry has called attention to the train derailment that released toxic chemicals in Ohio as well as allegations the U.S. may have sabotaged pipelines used to transport Russian gas.

The Biden administration has strongly rejected the allegations about the Nord Stream pipelines and defended its response in Ohio.

China has long been seen as less willing than Russia to take provocative steps that could be exposed and more concerned about being publicly blamed. U.S. intelligence judged that Russia tried to support Donald Trump in the last two presidential elections, while China in 2020 considered but did not try to influence the election.

But some U.S. officials believe China is now undertaking or considering operations it would not have in the past, according to the two people familiar with the matter. That's partly due to fears in Beijing that they are losing a battle of narratives in many countries, one of the people said.

Officials noted public examples identified in recent weeks by groups that track disinformation and influence.

Korea ready to act against US, South SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The influential sis-

ter of North Korea's leader warned Tuesday that her country is ready to take "quick, overwhelming action" against the United States and South Korea, a day after the U.S. flew a nuclearcapable B-52 bomber in a demonstration of strengthen against the North. Monday's U.S.-South Korean training involving the B-52 bomber over the Korean Peninsula was the latest in a series of drills between the allies in recent months. Their militaries are also preparing to revive their largest field exercises later this month. Kim Yo Jong didn't elaborate on any planned actions in her statement, but North Korea has often test-launched missiles

in response to U.S.-South Korean military drills because it views them as an invasion rehearsal. "We keep our eye on the restless military moves by the U.S. forces and the South Korean puppet military and are always on standby to take appropriate, quick and overwhelming action at any time according to our judgment," Kim Yo Jong said in the statement carried by state media.

PH leader orders crackdown after governor's killing MANILA,

Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday that he ordered police to crack down on illegal firearms and private armies and described as "terrifying" the weekend shootings that killed a provincial governor and eight others in a crowd. The attack on Negros Orien-

tal Gov. Roel Degamo at his home on Saturday by at least six men armed with assault rifles and wearing military camouflage and bullet-resistant vests was the deadliest on politicians in recent weeks. It was also the most alarming gun attack under Marcos, who said he was shocked when he saw footage of the gunmen walking into Degamo's residential compound then opening fire on just anybody in front of them, even those "who were not involved in their conflict." "This one is particularly terrifying and it's really ... I don't know. This does not belong in the society," Marcos said in a news conference when asked about the worst killings since he took office in June last year. Degamo's killing "is entirely unacceptable and it will not stand. This cannot go unpunished."

World

Zelenskyy vows not to retreat from Bakhmut



A Ukrainian soldier takes cover in a trench under Russian shelling on the frontline close to Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Sunday, March 5, 2023.

CHASIV YAR, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy vowed Monday not to retreat from Bakhmut as Russian forces encroached on the devastated eastern city they have sought to capture for six months at the cost of thousands of lives.

Less than a week ago, an adviser to Zelenskyy said the defenders might give up on Bakhmut and fall back to nearby positions.

But Zelenskyy on Monday chaired a meeting in which top military brass "spoke in favor of continuing the defense operation and further strengthening our positions in Bakhmut." Later in his nightly video address, the president reported that his advisers unanimously agreed to press on with the fight, "not to retreat" and to bolster Ukrainian defenses.

His top adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, told The Associated Press that Ukrainian forces around Bakhmut have been grinding down enemy forces, reinforcing their positions and training tens of thousands of Ukrainian military personnel for a possible counteroffensive.

Intense Russian shelling targeted the city in the Donetsk region and nearby villages as Moscow waged a three-sided assault to try to finish off Bakhmut's resistance.

The nearby towns of Chasiv Yar and Kostiantynivka came under heavy shelling, damaging cars and homes and sparking a fire. No casualties were immediately reported.

Police and volunteers evacuated people from Chasiv Yar and other front-line towns in an operation made difficult by the loss of bridges and constant artillery fire that has left barely a house standing.

Russian forces have been unable to deliver a knockout blow that would allow them to seize Bakhmut. Analysts say the city does not hold major strategic value and that its capture would be unlikely to serve as a turning point in the conflict.

The Russian push for Bakhmut reflects the Kremlin's broader struggle to achieve battlefield momentum. Moscow's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, soon stalled, and Ukraine launched a largely successful counteroffensive. Over the bitterly cold winter months, the fighting has largely been deadlocked.

The city's importance has become mostly symbolic. For Russian President Vladimir Putin, prevailing there would finally deliver some good news from the front. For Kyiv, the display of grit and defiance underscores the message that Ukraine is holding on after a year of brutal attacks, justifying continued support from its Western allies.

Syrian state media: Israeli strike damaged Aleppo airport

DAMASCUS (AP)—An Israeli airstrike hit the Aleppo airport early Tuesday and put it out of service, Syrian state media reported.

Citing a military source, the state news agency SANA said Israel "carried out an air attack from the direction of the Mediterranean Sea, west of Latakia, targeting Aleppo International Airport." SANA said the strike "caused material damage" to the airport.

It was not immediately clear if there were any casualties.

There was no comment from Israeli officials. Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of Syria in recent years, includments to the city's airport. ing attacks on the Damascus and Aleppo airports, but it rarely acknowledges or discusses the operations.

Israel has acknowledged, however, that it targets bases of Iran-allied militant groups, such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, which has sent thousands of fighters to support President Assad's forces.

Aleppo, which suffered widespread destruction in Syria's civil war, was again heavily damaged in the deadly 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria last month. A number of countries have since sent aid ship-

On Feb. 19. Israeli airstrikes targeted residential areas in Syria's capital, Damascus, killing at least five people and wounding 15, according to Syrian state news.

On Jan. 2, the Syrian army said Israel's military fired missiles toward the capital's international airport, putting it out of service and killing two soldiers. That attack came amid Israeli fears the Damascus airport was being used to funnel Iranian weaponry into the country.

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Good Housekeeping

Building your bookshelf

By KATIE LAUGHRIDGE

Tribune News Service

ookshelves are a versatile and functional piece of furniture that can enhance the look of any space in your home. While they primarily serve the practical purpose of storing books for many, they can also be a great way to showcase your personality and style (with or without books). A well-styled bookshelf can add character and depth to a room, making it feel more inviting and lived-in. But with so many options to choose from, it can be overwhelming to know where to start.

Here are some practical tips and creative ideas to help you style your bookshelf in a way that reflects your personal taste and elevates the overall aesthetic of your space.

Start with a plan

When deciding to make over my shelves, I find it important to start with a purpose and a plan. I first determine my goal. Am I seeking to incorporate my latest round of design book purchases, display a growing collection of blue and white ceramics, or pull in new colors from a freshly redecorated room? Then it's time to clear the slate—I like to empty the shelving entirely before placing new items, or the same items in new places.

Gathering up my collection of books and accessories to see how they work together before placing them gives me a feel for whether or not I have the cohesiveness and flow I want.

Do I have too much of a certain color? Do I have enough variety of shapes, sizes and textures? Will pieces actually fit (always measure your shelving before shopping)?

When I'm ready to place my items, I find it helpful to start with my largest items or statement pieces first. Carlie, our design manager, suggests beginning with the items you love and placing them in spots where they will shine the most. Then build around them, distributing items so you have a nice flow that draws your eye around the space.

If you're having trouble getting started, try placing your first few large or statement pieces in a rough triangle on your shelves—one piece toward the top center, another roughly on the middle left, and another on the lower right. Don't worry about making it perfect—the more organic-looking, the better.

These same styling processes works for styling floating shelves, a curio or bookcase, the top of a buffet or honestly any area where you'd like to create a vignette in your home!

Finding your spacing

One of the most challenging elements to get right during the design process is the use of negative space. Negative or empty space is your friend. Use it in between or on the edges of a shelf to space out smaller vignettes or groupings of items. When designing, I tend to like to create groupings of items in odd numbers like three or five (the caveat being that you can

use two things to create symmetry in an arrangement).

You can create contrast between shelves by decorating each level slightly differently than the one before it. If the top shelf has one large centered vignette, style two smaller groupings of items on the shelf below. Using the negative space on the sides and middle of these groupings help to carry your eye throughout the piece.

Making it yours

Styling a bookshelf is a fun and rewarding way to add a personal touch to your home decor. Whether you're aiming for a minimalist look or a maximalist one, the key is to strike a balance between form and function.

You can do lots of little things to turn your bookshelf into a space that truly reflects you. For instance, I love placing small lamps on shelves for mood lighting to soften a space. It's one touch that adds elegance and allows us to use overhead lights less, which is great for when we are winding down in the evenings. Although, this trick may require you to drill a hole in the back of your furniture piece depending on its location in the room, so if you are one that likes to rotate shelf designs often, the permanence of this solution might not work for you (and that's OK).

Don't forget to use the full depth of your shelves for a full-bodied design. Certain items can go behind others (like art or your favorite platter) and create visual interest for the pieces in front. This can be especially helpful if you have a dark, heavy furniture

piece you want to brighten up.

Remember to keep experimenting, rearranging and adding new items over time to keep your bookshelf fresh, interesting and a reflection of you. With a little bit of cre-

ativity and effort, you can turn your bookshelf into a stunning focal point in any room of your home

Styling a bookshelf can be a fun and creative process that can absolutely transform the look and feel of a room. What you love is always in style there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to bookshelf styling. The key is to find a balance between functionality and aesthetics, and to let your personality shine through.

HANDOUT/TNS

If you're having trouble getting started, try placing your first few large or statement pieces in a rough triangle on your shelves — one piece toward the top center, another roughly on the middle

With a little bit of imagination and effort, your bookshelf can become a focal point in your room that not only showcases your favorite books, but also adds a touch of personality and charm to your space.



left, and another on the lower right.

These are the top reasons to use vinegar in laundry



STUDIO GRAND WEB/DREAMSTIME/TNS

From combating underarm odor to brightening white clothing, here are the top reasons to use vinegar in your laundry.

By HUNTER BOYCE

No, it's not a myth: Vinegar can truly improve your washing, making your clothes cleaner than ever before. But, you don't need it for everything.

"Most detergents are formulated at a specific pH to work best, and directly adding vinegar can interrupt the active ingredients and actually create more problems, like discoloration and poor cleaning," Tide senior scientist Sammy Wang told Marthastewart.com. "Vinegar has a low pH (typically three to five), so it can help dissolve away residues that bind body soils to fabrics."

From combating underarm odor to brightening white clothing, here are the top reasons to use vinegar in your laundry.

Mildew and underarm odor

According to The Spruce, the acetic acid found in distilled white vinegar is strong enough to dissolve residues left by soaps and detergents while remaining weak enough to damage fabrics. Adding half a cup of vinegar to the final rinse cycle of your laundry will lead to brighter, clearer colors. The vinegar also acts as a whitener for stained white socks, dirty dishcloths and delicates.

To remove underarm odor from clothes, keep a spray bottle full of undiluted white vinegar on hand. Spray the vinegar directly on the underarm fabric and let it rest for 10 minutes. Then toss the piece of clothing into the washing machine with the rest of your laundry.

Hypoallergenic alternative

Washing your clothes with half a cup of distilled white vinegar, instead of standard detergents, is a great hypoallergenic alternative, Healthline reported.

People with sensitive skin can sometimes be irritated by the harsh chemicals used in certain detergents. Utilizing vinegar in place of these more standard detergents can lead to less irritation while keeping your laundry clean.

A great fabric softener

Vinegar can be a great fabric softener alternative, according to SF Gate. To use vinegar as a fabric softener, pour half of a cup of distilled white vinegar into the detergent or fabric softener dispenser during the final rinse cycle. Adding a few drops of essential oils can give your clothes a wonderful fragrance as well.

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Life & Style

Paris: Notre Dame Cathedral set to reopen in December 2024

PARIS (AP)—The reconstruction of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris is going fast enough to allow its reopening to visitors and faithful at the end of 2024, less than six years after a fire ravaged its roof, French officials said Monday.

The cathedral's iconic spire, which collapsed in the blaze, will gradually start reappearing above the monument this year in a powerful signal of its revival, the army general in charge of the colossal project, Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin, said.

"The return of the spire in Paris' sky will in my opinion be the symbol that we are winning the battle of Notre Dame," he told the Associated Press.

The reconstruction itself started last year, after more than two years of work to make the monument stable and secure enough for artisans to start rebuilding it.

Authorities have made the choice to rebuild the 12th century monument, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the way it was before. That includes recreating the 93-meter-high (315 ft) spire added in the 19th century by architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc.

Meanwhile, an exhibition called "Notre-Dame de Paris: at the heart of the construction site" is to open to visitors on Tuesday in an underground facility in front of the cathedral. Accessible for free, it highlights ongoing operations on the site and the expertise and skills of workers. It also features some remains from the fire and works of art from the cathedral.

Gen. Georgelin said the cathedral will reopen in December 2024, in line with the goal set by President Emmanuel Macron just after the fire—yet it will be too late for the Paris Olympic Games scheduled in summer next year.

"My job is to be ready to open this cathedral in 2024.



Charles, one of the carpenters puts the skills of their medieval colleagues on show on the plaza in front of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020.

And we will do it," Gen. in a capacity again to cele-Georgelin said. "We are fighting every day for that and we are on a good path."

This "means that the archbishop of the capital will be brate the Catholic liturgy in his cathedral" and the monument will also "be open for tourists to visit," he said.

Culture Minister Rima Ab-

dul-Malak told the AP that this doesn't mean all the renovation will be finished then. "There will still be some renovation work going on in 2025," she stressed.

Meanwhile, the new exhibition near the cathedral will allow visitors, including those coming for the Olympics, "to live what could be this experience of visiting Notre-Dame in a brand new way," she said. In addition to the free visit, a virtual reality show will allow paying visitors to dive into the history of the cathedral. "That will help also tourism in Paris," she added.

Everyday in the capital and across the country, about 1,000 people work to rebuild Notre Dame, Gen. Georgelin said.

"The biggest challenge is to comply precisely every day to the planning we have done," he stressed. "We have a lot of different works to achieve: the framework. the painting, the stones, the vault, the organ, the stained glass and so on."

Philippe Jost, managing director of the government agency overseeing the reconstruction, noted that the result "will be faithful to the original architecture" both because "we are sticking to the vanished shapes of the cathedral" and because "we are also sticking to the materials and construction methods" of medieval times.

"We don't do concrete vaults that look like stone, we do stone vaults that we rebuild as they were built in the Middle Ages," Jost said, adding that the roof framework will also be made from oak like it initially was.

Cartoonists criticize 'Dilbert' creator over racist remarks

NEW YORK (AP)—Cartoonists are pushing back against racist remarks made by "Dilbert" creator Scott Adams, with one artist even using his own strip this week to lampoon the disgraced cartoon now dropped by newspapers nationwide.

Darrin Bell is transforming his strip "Candorville" which usually features young Black and Latino characters—into a way to address Adams' racism by mimicking the look and style of "Dilbert," complete with wayward necktie.

"The only reason anyone knows who Scott Adams is because of the comics page. So I thought somebody on the comics page should respond to him on the comics page," Bell, the 2019 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for illustrated reporting and commentary, told The Associated Press.

In the strips running Monday to Saturday, Bell paired Dilbert with one of his own characters, Lemont Brown. In one, Dilbert hopes Lemont will side with him in his quest to get a laundry room installed at work.

"You could wash your hoodie," says Dilbert. Responds Lemont: "And you could wash your hood?"

Adams, who is white, was an outspoken—and contro-

versial-presence on social media long before describing Black people as a "hate group" on YouTube last month. Adams repeatedly referred to people who are Black as members of a "hate group" and said he would no longer "help Black Americans." He later said he was being hyperbolic, yet continued to defend his stance.

"When somebody goes too far like Scott Adams did, everyone who knows better should stand up and use their First Amendment to draw a line—to say that this is unacceptable," said Bell, whose new graphic novel "The Talk" explores growing up as a biracial man in white culture.

Other cartoonists have stepped forward to denounce Adams, like Bill Holbrook. the creator of "On the Fastrack," a strip that features an interracial family andlike "Dilbert"—focuses on a modern workplace.

Woman's lies and sexting put marriage on the brink

EAR ABBY: I found out today that my wife was sexting with a man in another state. His girlfriend sent me a message, which included a series of screenshots. I had confronted my wife regarding this prior to receiving the messages, but she swore she had sent only ONE topless photo and nothing else. After I reviewed the messages, I saw much more.

She claims "she doesn't remember everything," which I find hard to believe. Worse, they had planned to meet. She claims she didn't, but I saw a message saying that once I went back home (we were visiting her parents), she would stay an extra week with our son so he could "spend more time with the grandparents"—and she could maneuver to meet up with him. She claims she didn't, but I can't believe her based upon her lying repeatedly about this.

We have a child together, so I don't want to walk away, but I'm deeply hurt and no longer trust her. I know you will recommend marriage counseling, but beyond that process, is there anything I should do?

LOST IN THE EAST

DEAR LOST: Has your wife always been this way, or is this behavior something new? She seems to be severely allergic to the truth. By all means, attempt marriage counseling if she is willing. However, if she isn't willing, have some counseling without her. And start interviewing attorneys to

represent you in what is likely to be a divorce. Without trust, there can be no marriage.

P.S. Save those messages and images the girlfriend sent you because they could come in handy.

DEAR ABBY: I'm 59 and the oldest of four children. When we were kids, our parents were raging alcoholics. They smoked pot and were barely functioning adults. As the oldest, I was tasked with caring for and raising the other three, which I did to protect them from my parents' nonsense.

We were never close to our parents. Our father passed some years ago, which left our mom, who continued to live her boozefilled life. She was a terrible mother. She never protected us from my father's verbal and physical abuse. My brother still has nightmares about him.

Now that our mother has dementia, my siblings make a lot of effort to spend time with her. I refuse to have anything to do with her. My sisters say I should make amends because she won't live forever. I have made my peace with it all, and I'm fine without what I never had.

My siblings think I should "just get over it" because she can't remember anything. Because she can't remember doesn't negate the fact that it happened. I've had a fantastic life and family without her being part of it. I'm truly happy. Am I wrong for standing strong on my decision?

RESOLUTE IN FLORIDA

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR RESOLUTE: Because your mother can no longer remember what a failure she was as a parent doesn't mean you must magically forget. She has reached a point where she is beyond any help you can give her. Now it's time to take care of yourself. If you feel it's better to stand strong on your decision, do not allow yourself to be guilted into doing otherwise.

Good advice for everyone - teens to seniors - is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

LOOK, HOBBES. THERE'S A QUIZ IN MY NEW ISSUE DOES YOUR GUM DELIVER IO QUESTIONS SHOW WHAT YOU COULD BE

LET'S SEE HOW MY GUM DOES. "1. HOW HARD IS YOUR GUM AT THE BEGINNING A) ROCK-LIKE OR BRITTLE

B) PLEASANTLY FIRM C) SQUISHY OR BENDY





GOSH, I'VE GOT NEGATIVE FIVE POINTS ALREADY! I'M NOT GETTING ALL THE PERFORMANCE I'M ENTITLED TO!

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®







Adam@home



The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy



site

17 "Phooey!"

18 Overact

19 Aromas

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wow!'

25 Damp at

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By Eugene Sheffer **CROSSWORD** 41 Literary ACROSS 59 Kick back 16 Biz Jane bigwig

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from Tokyo 53 Fun and games Yesterday's answer 3-8

30

32

For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touchtone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King **STUMPED?** Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: James Van Der Beek, 46; Freddie Prinze Jr., 47; Camryn Manheim, 62: Aidan Quinn, 64.

Happy Birthday: Consider your options, evaluate the cost and time involved, and adopt change with open arms. There is no place for anger if you want to get things done. Sort through your differences with others and find a compromise that will ensure vou move forward. Recognize embellishment, overindulgence and emotional blackmail, and nip any sudden fallout. Micromanagement is the fastest route to victory. Your numbers are 9, 17, 21, 27, 33, 45, 49.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll have plenty to do, so don't waste time. The busier you are, the easier it will be to avoid turmoil and interference. Don't share personal information or believe everything you hear. A change to your surroundings will pique your imagination.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Good things come to those who wait; this time, the recipient is you. Patience will pay off and everything will fall into place. Take what comes your way and give it a unique spin; praise will follow. Make healthiness your goal. ����

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Expect someone to lead you astray or get in your way. Focus on your goal, and be sure to finish what you start. Consider how you present yourself to others and update your image to ensure you have an impact. 🛇

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Confusion will occur if someone sends mixed messages. A change may be necessary, but preparation must be in place before you move forward. Be resourceful, talk to experts and pay attention to detail. Don't take a risk with your health.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't give in to demands; do what makes the most sense to you. How you present yourself and your intentions will determine how others respond. Let charm lead the way and a hands-on approach be your calling card. Romance is in the stars. ••••

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Handle responsibilities before moving on to the things you consider unessential. Your ability to take care of matters efficiently and without anger will encourage working in unison with someone who can help bring about positive

change. Travel will spark your imagination. ••• LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): If there is something you don't like, act. You can't resolve matters if you don't let others know how you feel and what you want. Showing interest in what others like will help you get what

you want. 🛇 🔾 🔾 SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Making comparisons will hold you back. Shoot for the stars, be open to doing things differently and bring about positive change. Ignore what others do or say and follow your instincts. Pay attention to

detail and oversee everything as it unfolds. ••• SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be realistic, look at the facts and don't count on anyone but yourself to fix what is going wrong. Tally up what irks you and devise a doable plan. A social event will help establish your popularity and boost your confidence. 😂

EUGENIA

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't fight an impossible battle. Concentrate on what's important to you, and you'll make progress that ends in personal gain. A change to your living arrangements will resolve a pending problem. OOOOO

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Use emotional tactics to your advantage. If someone plays tough, suggest alternatives to control the outcome. Revisiting relationships that didn't work will help you recognize why. Make personal gain and romance your goals. 🗪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Listen to reason and distance yourself from lofty suggestions that involve risks. You can avoid instability due to false information or poor decisions if you are true to yourself and those with similar concerns. An emotional situation will result in empty promises. ❖❖❖

Birthday Baby: You are unique, entertaining and unpredictable. You embrace challenges and offer

O: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. OO: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. QQQ: Focus and you'll reach your goals. OOOO: Aim high; start new projects. **QQQQ**: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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Difficulty: ***

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

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9	1	7	3	6	2	4	8	5	© 202

3 - 8

WONDERWORD

By DAVID

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the letter of the word WONDERWORD. VOLCANOES

VOLCANOES Solution: 5 lette										πers				
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The NEW Volume 70 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Mitchell scores 40, Stevens rallies Cavs past Celtics in OT



CLEVELAND (AP)-Lamar Stevens spent three quarters watching and waiting his turn. When it finally came, he didn't waste a sin-

gle second.

Donovan Mitchell scored 40 points and Stevens came off the bench to fuel Cleveland's fourth-quarter comeback with his hustle, leading the Cavaliers to a 118-114 win on Monday night over the Boston Celtics, who lost their second overtime game in less than 24 hours.

Evan Mobley added 25 points and 16 rebounds for the Cavs, who improved to 7-0 in OT while avenging a loss in Boston five days ago. Cleveland trailed by 14 entering the fourth before Stevens, who only averages 12 minutes per game, entered and turned the game around.

"There is no way we win that game without Lamar," Cavs coach J.B. Bickerstaff said. "He changed the tone, the physicality, the effort."

Jaylen Brown scored 32 and Malcolm Brogdon 24 for the Celtics, who didn't arrive at their hotel in Cleveland until 2:30 a.m. after losing to the New York Knicks in double overtime on Sunday.

But even missing All-Star Game MVP Jayson Tatum, who stayed behind in Boston to rest along with center Al Horford

after the taxing loss to the Knicks, the Celtics were up by double digits with seven minutes left.

And, they had a chance to win in the final second of regulation, but Grant Williams missed two free throws with 0.8 seconds left and Marcus Smart barely missed a tip-in at the horn as the teams went to OT tied at 109-all.

Williams had confidently told Mitchell he was going



Cleveland Cavaliers forward Lamar Stevens (8) celebrates after scoring against the Boston Celtics during overtime of an NBA basketball game, Monday, March 6, 2023, in Cleveland.

to make both shots before his misfires.

"He gave us both, but I didn't box out Marcus Smart for the tip and that's what I'm thinking about," Mitchell said. "Thank God he missed 'em and we got the win."

While energizing the Cavs, the misses hurt the Celtics, who were on fumes.

"It's definitely a little deflating," Brogdon said. "We were up 10-12 points with three minutes left. We shouldn't have let it get to that point. We shouldn't have to rely on free throws. It's not his fault."

After playing just nine seconds in the first three quarters, Stevens came off the bench and grabbed eight rebounds—six offensive—and scored eight points, including a 3-pointer with 2:14 left in OT to put Cleveland ahead 114-112.

"I just felt I could help with a little energy boost," Stevens said. "I was just trying to impact the game however I could."

His second basket of overtime put the Cavs ahead for good before Brown's layup with 43 seconds left pulled the Celtics within 116-114.

However, Darius Garland made a pair of free throws with 9 seconds to go for the Cavs and after securing the final rebound, Mitchell, who played with a badly sprained left middle finger, slammed the ball off the floor as Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse erupted following a win that was probably tougher than needed.

Brown didn't make any excuses after the Celtics lost for the fourth time in five games.

"There were some key vital plays that we missed, but we can't blame fatigue," said Brown, who played 45 minutes after logging 47 on Sunday. "I wish one of the games had turned into a win. If I've got to play 47 minutes the next game, I'm down with it."

76ERS 147, PACERS 143 **INDIANAPOLIS**

(AP)—

Joel Embiid scored 42 points, James Harden added 14 points, 20 assists and nine rebounds, and Philadelphia pulled away late for a victory over Indiana in an entertaining game virtually devoid of defense.

Embiid made 11 of 16 field goals and all 19 free-throw attempts. Tyrese Maxey scored 24 points and Jalen McDaniels added 20 for the 76ers, who have won two straight.

Tyrese Haliburton led the Pacers with 40 points and 16 assists in just their second home game since Feb. 16. Jordan Nwora finished with 16 points. Five other players reached double figures in Indiana's second game in two nights.

HEAT 130, HAWKS 128

MIAMI (AP)—Jimmy Butler had 26 points, Victor Oladipo and Caleb Martin combined to score 43 off the bench and Miami held off Atlanta.

Butler also had nine rebounds and nine assists for Miami, which swept a two-

game set from the Hawks. Bam Adebayo scored 16 points, Duncan Robinson had 14, Tyler Herro finished with 13 and the Heat set a season high with 59 bench points.

Trae Young scored 25 for Atlanta, which got 23 from Dejounte Murray and 17 apiece from Saddiq Bey and John Collins.

Miami (35-31) moved 2 1/2 games ahead of Atlanta in the race for the No. 7 spot in the Eastern Conference, and took the season series 3-1—so the Heat would hold the tiebreaker over the Hawks as well.

NUGGETS 118. RAPTORS 113

DENVER (AP)—Jamal Murray scored 24 points, Michael Porter Jr. had 20 and Denver scored the last six points of the game to beat Toronto.

Aaron Gordon added 19 points for the Nuggets, who won their ninth in a row at home. They improved to 24-1 in their last 25 games at Ball Arena. Nikola Jokic finished an assist shy of another tripledouble. He had 17 points and 13 rebounds.

Fred VanVleet had 21 points for the Raptors. Pascal Siakam added 19.

VanVleet hit a pair of free throws as Toronto regained a one-point lead, but Denver scored the final six points, all on free throws, to secure the win. Murray converted a free throw in that final stretch after Scottie Barnes was called for a technical and ejected by referee Scott Foster.

TRAIL BLAZERS 110, PISTONS 104

DETROIT (AP)—Damian Lillard had 31 points, 13 rebounds and 12 assists, securing his second triple-double of the season before the end of the third quarter, and Portland beat Detroit.

The dynamic guard scored

16 points in the first quarter to give the Trail Blazers a 31-18 lead, and they had little trouble keeping a comfortable margin against a banged-up and slumping team for most of the night.

Detroit pulled within six points with 1:39 left to fire up the previously quiet fans, and Jerami Grant quieted them with a 3-pointer on the ensuing possession. Grant finished with 26 points against his former team.

Isaiah Livers scored 17 for the Pistons, who have lost a season-high eight straight games.

Huerter has 25, Sabonis a triple-double, Kings beat Pelicans

BC-BKN--Pelicans-Kings

KINGS 123, **PELICANS 108**

SACRAMENTO(AP)— Kevin Huerter scored 25 points, Domantas Sabonis had his eighth triple-double of the season and the Sacramento Kings beat the New Orleans Pelicans 123-108 on Monday night.

Sabonis finished with 19 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists. He leads the NBA with 52 double-doubles.

Huerter added eight assists and five rebounds for the Kings (38-26). Sacramento has won six of its first seven games after the All-Star break.

The Kings outscored the Pelicans 38-20 in the third quarter after the game was tied at 59-all at halftime.

Davion Mitchell got the start for injured Kings star De'Aaron Fox and scored 15 points and added six assists. Trey Lyles scored 14 points off the bench.

Brandon Ingram scored 24 points for the Pelicans (31-34). New Orleans has lost six of its last seven games,

Jonas Valanciunas added 19 points and 12 rebounds.

No timetable for Ja Morant's return during 'healing process' what appeared to be a gun at a or complaints about Morant's poor choices in the past."

LOS ANGELES (AP)— There's no timetable for Ja Morant to return to the Memphis Grizzlies, and the All-Star guard knows he's made "difficult decisions and poor choices" that he has to be accountable for, coach Taylor Jenkins said Sunday night.

Morant was not with the team in Los Angeles for games against the Clippers on Sunday and the Lakers on Tuesday while the NBA investigates a social media post in which Morant appeared to be holding a gun.

"Very tough moment, for sure," Jenkins said of the video.

Morant streamed the video on his Instagram account early Saturday of himself holding nightclub, hours after playing in Denver. He said in a staterepresents him that he takes ing online. "full responsibility" for his actions and that he was going to "take some time away to get help."

On Monday, police in Colorado said they were investigating Morant's actions and whether he may have broken any laws. Morant's video is believed to have been filmed in Glendale, a small enclave surrounded by Denver and known for its strip clubs and shopping centers.

Capt. Jamie Dillon said police did not receive any calls

actions but began looking into them Saturday after learnment through the agency that ing about the video circulat-

Defense lawyers who have represented people on gun charges in Colorado say it is a misdemeanor to possess a gun while under the influence of drugs or alcohol so that is one possible violation authorities could be looking into.

"It may have all been laughter and champagne, but under the eyes of the law, in can get to be a serious situation," attorney Jeff Weeden said.

The Grizzlies coach said Morant understands he's made "some difficult decisions and

"He's definitely embracing the mistakes that he's made, but only time will tell," Jenkins said. "We're going to support him and we're going to hold him accountable to make those changes."

Jenkins declined to outline the steps Morant needs to take to rejoin the team, saying: "We love him, we want what's best for him, we support him. It's going to be a difficult process but we've got a great group to get through this.'

He called it "an ongoing healing process."

The league, if it finds wrongdoing, could fine or suspend Morant.

Morant also was the subject of a league investigation after a Jan. 29 incident in Memphis that he said led to a friend of his being banned from home games for a year. That incident occurred after a game against the Indiana Pacers. Multiple media outlets reported that members of the Pacers saw a red dot pointed at them, and a team security guard believed the laser was attached to a gun.

The NBA confirmed that unnamed individuals were banned from the arena but said its investigation found no evidence that anyone was threatened with a weapon.

"This is a tough time for a

young kid that's got to grow and get better," Jenkins said. "He's got huge responsibilities not just for the team, for the city, but I know how he's built with that care factor and what steps he's now taking. It's a step in the direction of really being the best version of

Now in his fourth season with the Grizzlies, the 23-yearold two-time All-Star is the father of a young daughter. Jenkins described Morant as "a generally amazing person, great family person, a father, brother, son, member of our community."

"My hope is that he just gets better," Jenkins said. "He knows he's got a lot of love and support."

Ex-Raider Derek Carr agrees to 4-year contract with Saints



NEW OR-LEANS (AP)— Derek Carr has proved repeatedly that he can pro-

duce as a passer.

What the former Raiders quarterback hasn't done is win in the playoffs, something he aims to change in New Orleans, where he'll be reunited with Dennis Allen — his first NFL coach.

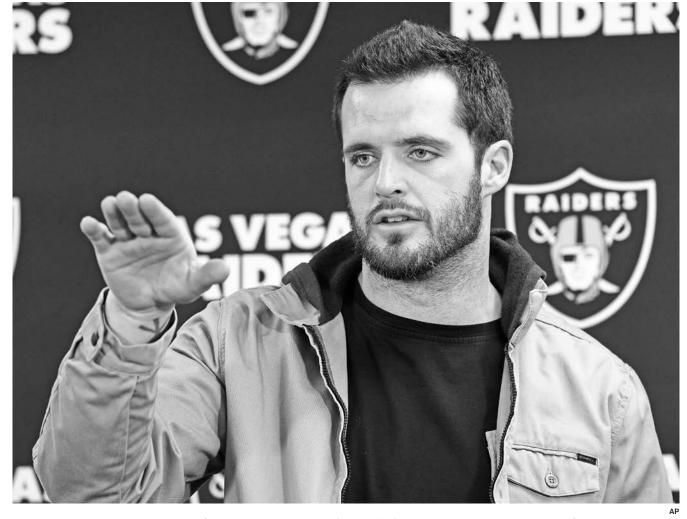
Carr has agreed to a fouryear contract with the Saints, and a person familiar with the situation said the deal could be worth up to \$150 million.

The person spoke to The Associated Press about the contract's value on condition of anonymity Monday because financial terms were not released when the Saints announced their agreement with Carr, a four-time Pro Bowler who ranks fourth in the NFL in yards passing since entering the league.

"Derek's experience, leadership and skillset will be an asset to our offense," Saints general manager Mickey Loomis said.

Carr played nine seasons for the Raiders and holds club records for yards passing (35,222) and touchdown passes (217). But after struggling late last season, he was benched with two games remaining.

Carr, who turns 32 on March 28, was released by Las Vegas on Feb. 14 after he declined to waive the no-trade clause in his contract. Las Vegas needed to trade or release him by that date or \$40.4 million of his contract over the next two years would have become fully guaranteed.



Las Vegas Raiders quarterback Derek Carr meets with reporters after an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Pittsburgh, Saturday, Dec. 24, 2022.

The knock on Carr was that his tenure as the Raiders' starting QB produced just two playoff appearances and no postseason victories. Now he will have an opportunity in New Orleans to demonstrate that he can get better results with a different organization.

Allen, meanwhile, urgently needs to win. He went 8-28 in his first head coaching job with the Raiders, but he got a second chance in New Orleans in 2022 after

overseeing one of the NFL's best defenses during more than a half-decade as a coordinator under Sean Payton.

While New Orleans again fielded an elite defense last season, the Saints finished 7-10 and out of the playoffs because of an inconsistent and turnover-prone offense.

Allen was the Raiders' coach when the club selected Carr in the second round of the 2014 draft out of Fresno State. Four games into that season, Allen was fired. But

he had positive early impressions of Carr that have been largely validated since.

"In addition to his talent, I admired his approach to the game, work ethic and commitment to get better every day in what were the formative stages of his career," Allen said. "From afar and when we played him as an opponent, I saw Derek's development into one of the most productive quarterbacks in the National Football League."

Carr indicated during the

week of the Pro Bowl that a talk with Peyton Manning encouraged him to explore free agency. The Indianapolis Colts released Manning in 2012 and he went on to win a Super Bowl with the Denver Broncos after the 2015 season.

"I'm just looking for teams that have made that decision consistently that they'll do whatever it takes to put a winning program out there," Carr said on Feb. 2. "So for me, that's just to win, win a championship. That's at the forefront of the mind. It's not money."

Since 2006, the Saints have made the playoffs nine times and won a Super Bowl, but all of those postseason appearances came with franchise all-time passer Drew Brees at quarterback and Payton as coach. Brees retired after the 2020 season and Payton retired the following year before recently resuming his coaching career with the Denver Broncos.

Still, the Carr signing should provide a measure of stability for the Saints at an all-important position that was shrouded in uncertainty following last season.

Jameis Winston is under contract with Saints through 2023, but New Orleans could release him. His contract calls for a base salary of \$12.8 million next season and he played in just three games in 2022 before losing his job — in part because of a back injury — to Andy Dalton.

Winston, who was hurt in Week 1, tried to continue playing in Weeks 2 and 3, when he threw five interceptions and was sacked seven times while passing for just two TDs.

When Winston asserted he was healthy enough to play again and wanted another chance, the Saints stuck with Dalton, who completed 66.7% of his passes for 2,871 yards with 18 touchdowns and nine interceptions in 14 starts.

Dalton, 35 and a 12-year NFL veteran, is due to be a free agent this offseason.

Brady, Brown prove combine flops can become NFL stars

By ARNIE STAPLETON

Long before the NFL's annual scouting combine became a prime-time football fix for fans ahead of free agency and the draft, Mike Mamula absolutely killed it as a combine trailblazer in 1995.

He was among the first players to train specifically for the staple of tests he'd face at the combine: the 40-yard dash that measures speed, the threecone drill that calculates agility and the 225-pound bench press that gauges strength and stamina.

After his impressive showing in Indy, Mamula rocketed into the first round, where the Philadelphia Eagles traded the 12th overall pick and two second-round selections to Tampa Bay so they could move up five spots and get the Boston College defensive end at No. 7.

Mamula proved more of a

workout warrior than Sunday star in his solid five-year career with the Eagles, illustrating the inexact nature of projecting professional success at the combine, where studs can eventually turn out to be duds and flops can turn out to be outstanding players.

Although some prospects

Although some prospects skip certain components of the combine and choose to show off in more familiar surroundings at their college pro day or in visits with specific teams, the vast majority now target the week in Indianapolis just like Mamula did.

They train like prizefighters getting ready for their big fight, pumping iron and cutting carbs to stand out amongst their peers—about a third of the invitees in any given year go undrafted while a few dozen snubs take their places in the three-day, sevenround draft in April.

This focus helps produce

memorable moments of athletic power and prowess at the combine every year.

There was wide receiver John Ross III limping across the finish line after blazing to a record 4.22-second time in the 40-yard dash in 2017.

His is the most talked about 40 since Deion Sanders' 4.27-second hand-clocked time in 1989 when he kept running straight through the tunnel as scouts clapped.

"I don't even believe I stretched," Sanders recalled years later. "You wanna know why? Because I never seen a cheetah stretch before he go get his prey."

Whereas Sanders became a Pro Football Hall of Famer and two-sport star, Ross had a mostly forgettable five-year NFL career in which he missed more games than he played after the Cincinnati Bengals selected him ninth overall in the draft.

Orlando Brown Jr. had the opposite experience. The only thing that went right for the massive tackle from Oklahoma at the 2018 scouting combine was the vote of confidence from his Heisman Trophy-winning teammate.

"When are you ever going to watch Orlando Brown run 40 yards down the field?" quarterback Baker Mayfield asked that week. "You can watch last year's tape and see he allowed zero sacks. I'd say that's pretty important for a left tackle."

Measures matter, too, however, and he fell from a projected first-rounder to the third round of the draft, where the Baltimore Ravens took a flyer on him with the 83rd overall pick.

The nearly 6-foot-8, 345-pound left tackle managed just 14 reps on the 225-pound bench press, the lowest total of any lineman who lifted at the

combine that year.

Things only got worse for the son of former Browns and Ravens right tackle Orlando Brown a day later when he lumbered through the 40-yard dash in 5.85 seconds. Even by big O-linemen standards, that's sloth-like slow, and it was the slowest of anyone at that year's event.

Brown, whose broad and vertical jumps were also the lowest of all players, was undeterred by his wretched week at the combine.

"I've been fat my whole life," he explained. "I wish I was fast."

Brown, however, made the Pro Bowl in his second season and has made every one since. Last month he won a Super Bowl ring while anchoring Kansas City's stout offensive line, and he's in line for another huge paycheck this spring.

Another player who looked overmatched at his combine

was none other than seventime Super Bowl-winning quarterback Tom Brady.

We've all seen the official combine photo of the scrawny Brady with uneven bangs standing expressionless in baggy shorts at the 2000 combine where he was a late-round prospect hoping for a chance.

Brady ran the 40 in a turtle-like 5.28 seconds and posted an unimpressive 24 1/2-inch vertical jump.

The only radar he was on was that of the New England Patriots, where head coach Bill Belichick and general manager Scott Pioli were just months into their new jobs and targeted a QB in the later rounds.

They selected Brady in the sixth round after 198 other players were drafted, including seven quarterbacks.

Brady retired last month as the GOAT, a stark reminder that projecting pro success will always be an inexact science and the NFL scouting combine doesn't always make or break a player.

SIS routes GCA in MS boys v-ball

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com REPORTER



The Saipan International School Geckos boys varsity volleyball team routed the

Christian Academy Eagles in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023.

The Geckos defeated the Eagles in two hard-fought sets last Thursday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. With that win, the Geckos have become a force to be reckoned with as they remain the only undefeated team with seven wins.

The Eagles tried to penetrate the sticky defense of the Geckos in the first set but ultimately failed as the Geckos won, 21-14.

The second set was much harder for the Geckos to navigate through as the Eagles



In this file photo, Saipan International School's Moshe Sikkel, right, tries to block a spike attempt from a Grace Christian Academy varsity volleyball player during their game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

LADY

From Page 36

effect of runs erupted into a 9-run third inning.

They soared into the fourth inning with seven more runs including an inside-the-park home run by Bong Babauta. A few mishandled plays on the Lady Sufa's defense allowed the Lady Blue Jays to capitalize.

At this point, the Lady Blue Jays had the enormous lead and pitcher Bert Camacho brought them home with a shutout of the Lady Sufa's lineup in the fourth inning to end the game via run-

In the last women's game of the day, the Hotshots en-

Last month, he completed

the Luneta To Tagaytay 60KM

Midnight Ultramarathon. Be-

fore that exhausting race, he

completed his first ultrama-

VILLAFRIA

From Page 36

gaged the Lady Legals in a pitching duel as both teams failed to score in multiple innings throughout the game.

Lady Legals pitcher Semerina Simram pitched a no-no in the first inning after striking out the first three batters in the Hotshots' lineup. However, the Hotshots turned on the ignition in the second inning for an 8-run inning first led by Rosie Saralu.

The middle and bottom of the Hotshots' lineup contributed to their team's efforts with base hit after base hit, but finally Simram got a hold of herself and shut down the last batter.

The Lady Legals only scored one run in the first inning thanks to Catalina Dela Cruz's RBI off teammate Pauline Camacho.

tramarathon.

Saipan in a time of 23:06.

The rest of the innings started and ended quietly with both pitchers-Simram and Janice Celis-meeting in a stalemate as their offense could not get past their pitches.

Then, in the sixth inning, the floodgates burst open for the Lady Legals as Tiah Camacho started the insurgence of runs to catch up with the Hotshots and still stay in the game, as they now lead by one, 9-8.

However, in the last inning, the Lady Legals were gassed out and couldn't score anymore, while the Hotshots brought in 5 crucial runs and stole the W right from under their noses, 13-9.

The men's masters league results will come out in the next issues of Saipan Tribune.

are concerned, Villafria clarified that the previous article citing that he needs new shoes in the introduction was meant as a joke However, he did say that new shoes are welcome and thanked Tan Holdings for

rathon, albeit virtually, when he entered the 70K Ayta Ul-He also took part in the Ayta 555K Bike, which like the 70K Ayta Ultramarathon, he also virtually completed on giving him a pair of Skechers in his previous races. As far as donations of shoes

ICS CLARK ANIMO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ronald Villafria poses with his Nueva Ecija Runners teammates after completing the half marathon of the TCS Clark Animo International Marathon in Clark City, Pampanga last weekend.

tried to soar into a third tiebreaking set, but their skill and teamwork-coupled with their strong serves and precise sets earned them their unbroken streak and won the game, 21-19.

The Geckos are set to face off against the Francisco M. Sablan Middle School tonight and with their momentum on their side, the team is poised to continue their winning streak.

In other results that night, FMS defeated ChaCha Ocean View Middle School, 21-13, 22-20; Hopwood Middle School forfeited against Saipan Community School; the Tatagas blew Mount Carmel School out of the water in three sets, 19-21, 21-6, 15-8; COVMS JV blew past SIS JV, 21-8, 21-17; and SCS JV edged HMS JV, 21-14, 11-21, 15-12.

In Pool A standings behind DanDan Middle School's 6-1 card is TMS with 6 wins and 2 loss; SCS is at 4-3; HMS is 2-5; and Mount Carmel School has yet to win with 7 losses.

In Pool B standings, SIS leads with their 7 wins; Agape Christian School is at 5-3; GCA is



In this file photo, Grace Christian Academy boys varsity volleyball players, left, and Saipan International School players set up during their game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Middle School Volleyball League 2022-2023 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

4-3; FMS is 2-5; and COVMS has yet to win with 7 losses.

In the junior varsity standings. HMS is undefeated with 4 wins; DMS has a 3-1 card; SCS is 1-2; COVMS has 1 win and 2 losses; and SIS has 4 losses.

Tonight is the last game of the regular season with the playoffs to begin on Thursday, March 9, at 4:45pm, then will resume the next day, and the championship rounds are set for Saturday, March 11, at 8am.

SFA

From Page 36

would be harmful to our fish stocks in the lagoon and especially to turtles, rays, and reef sharks," said SFA president Tony Scragg.

SFA is composed of about 25 members and around 12-15 boats.

House Bill 23-5, introduced by Rep. Denita K. Yangetmai (D-Saipan), is now before the House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee.

Fisherman Gene Weaver, who heads the non-profit Tasi To Table, said he's against all forms of gillnet legislation.

"If this bill is passed not only will we see a decline in fish stocks, we'll also see declines in revenues from gas stations (fuel, oil, lubes), tackle shops (rod and reels, lines, hooks, etc.), boat registrations, most importantly tourists when tourists come to visit our island. Our promotions show pristine waters, the waters are not pristine without marine life," he said.

Weaver, who said his opinion is as a private citizen and not as president of Tasi to Table, added thorough research should take place prior to any introduction of such a bill.

He also believes the Division of Fish and Wildlife may not even be able to effectively enforce the new bill legalizing gillnet use.

"With the financial situation we are currently in we know there's no funding for enforcement. With the surveys, petitions and interviews, the majority is against this legislation. I hope our elected leaders can see the impact of this bill on our fish stocks, environment, coral reefs, marine life, economy, tourism...if passed. As a fisherman, father, and grandfather I am 100% against the bill."

Tasi to Table vice president Dan Wolack agrees with Weaver.

"Every officer in Tasi to Table is very against gill net fishing. However, as a non-profit we try not make official positions on matters like this but are fighting this bill on a personal level as a concerned citizen."

He said they are also educating their students on this bill and letting them draw their own conclusions.

"We're encouraging them to make their voices heard as they are our future and this bill could have a huge impact on their futures."

Floyd Masga, former Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Council coordinator, said he opposes the bill as a private citizen.

"There are already provisions with DFW to grant special permits. However, gillnets are harmful and do not discriminate what they catch," he said.

Mariana Islands Nature Alliance executive director Roberta Guerrero earlier opposed the legislation, saying it will have an immediate and long-lasting negative impact on Saipan's lagoon ecosystem.

"Although there is a perception that this method of fishing is sustainable, it is not, and not

only fish will be affected; coral, seagrass, our shorelines, and our children's resources will be negatively impacted," she said in her comments to the bill.

An online petition, authored by former Tasi To Table vice president Wayne Pangelinan, opposing the bill is also slowly gaining a lot of support.

As of March 7, over 1,500 have signed the petition at: https://www.change.org/p/noto-gillnet-fishing-in-the-cnmistop-hb-23-5?signed=true.

"Today we see marine life thriving. Placing gillnets will affect not only fish populations, but also our coral reefs and others. The bycatch alone is for any targeted species, this will catch all!" said Pangelinan

A gillnet is a wall of netting that hangs in the water column, typically made of monofilament or multifilament nylon.

Gillnetting has been a major source of mortality for all sea turtle species, Pangelinan added.

"Turtles encountering a gillnet can quickly become entangled around their head or flippers as they try to escape. Entangled turtles will drown if held under the water but have a higher chance of survival if they can reach the surface to breathe. The nylon can tighten around the turtle's soft body parts and cause deep cuts potentially leading to infections, limited movement, or complete loss of the limb. Limited use of appendages can impair a turtle's natural feeding, breathing, and swimming behavior," he said, citing various sources.

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SIS routes GCA in MS boys v-ball

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Lady Blue Jays, Hotshots win women's league opener



By LEIGH GASES

n the return of the women's league in the 2023 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association League, the Lady Blue Jays and the Hotshots ripped through their foes at the DanDan Softball Field.

In spite of the gloomy overcast clouds that loomed above on that Spring Sunday

morning, the first couple of games went on uninterrupted until a

heavy pattering of rain later on delayed the rest into the late afternoon.

The first women's games were played between the Lady Blue Jays and Lady Sufa,

> with the former overpowering the latter in a 19-5 game, while

the Hotshots shot through the Lady Legals, 13-9 in a Destiny Pangelinan, a ripple close match.

The Lady Blue Jayswhose team consist mostly of returning players from the 2022 women's champions Queens of Diamond—debuted this season still wearing tiaras on their heads as they reigned supreme in their offense.

Although it was a slow burn and they were behind on the count in the first couple of innings, 4-3, in favor of Lady Sufa, the Lady Blue Jays' lumber woke up from their slumber as they pelted the Lady Sufa with hit after hit in the third inning.

From the top of the Lady Blue Jays' lineup starting with

See Lady on Page 35



Villafria completes half marathon this time

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Run Saipan member Ron-Villafria has made his home club

proud once more after completing the half marathon of the TCS Clark Animo International Marathon last weekend in the Philippines.

The 52-year-old longtime Saipan resident, who is currently taking up vocational courses in his native country, finished the 21-kilometer course around Clark City, Pampanga in an unofficial time of 1 hour and 48 minutes.

The Clark Animo International Marathon marked the first time the longtime Saipan resident had done the half marathon in seven years after



Run Saipan member Ronald Villafria poses in front of the half marathon finish line of last weekend's TCS Clark Animo International Marathon in Clark City, Pampanga.

being preoccupied organizing races with the Triathlon Association of the CNMI, where he was an officer.

He dedicated his latest feat, first and foremost, to his loving and understanding wife, Lorna, as well as his running clubs, Run Saipan in the CNMI and the Nueva Ecija Runners in the Philippines.

Next up for Villafria is the SUB1hour 10K race in Manila on May 14. He will then take on the challenge of the 70K Ultra Marathon-San Jose to Gapan in Nueva Ecija—the week after on May 20.

Villafria is currently taking up EIM Electrical Installation Maintenance courses under the Technical Education And Skills Development Authority in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija.

See VILLAFRIA on Page 35

SFA opposes gillnet fishing

» TTT leaders also oppose bill in personal level



MARK RABAGO

Saipan Fishermen's Association president Tony Scragg, second from left, poses with skipjack trophy sponsor Pacific Rim Land Development, LLC and its president Keith Stewart and one of the winners of the category during the awards ceremony for the 37th Annual Saipan International Fishing Tournament held in July 2021 at the Aqua Resort Club poolside.

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com ASSOCIATE EDITOR

FISH ON The Saipan Fishermen Association is opposing a bill that seeks to

authorize the use of gillnets, locally known as "tekking,"

on Saipan and the Northern Islands.

"This has been a topic of discussion during our recent meeting and the consensus among our officers and members is that we are firmly opposed to this bill. We feel it

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